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Vol. IV, Pt. I : Gaṇapati and Skanda - Murukaṉ
Vol. IV, Pt. II : Brahmā and other Deities

Raju Kalidos

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Vol. IV, Part I
GAṆPATI AND SKANDA - MURUKAṈ

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Preface

The present two parts of Vol. IV (Pt. I Gaṇapati and Skanda-Murukaṉ and Pt. II Brahmā and Other Deities) were completed during 1990-92. Fieldwork in all centers was undertaken few more times (March 1991, Jan. 1992 and Feb. 1992). Since 1992, I have revisited the places several more times to be on track with the problem investigated. The visit to monuments at different seasons of the year and at different strokes of the clock in a day helped to develop an intimacy with art and its glorious heritage. I am deeply indebted to the funding agencies, the UGC, ICHR, AIIS and the Tamil University, but for whose help the visits to the field and libraries would have been a nightmare.

Originally Pt. I was designed as Vol. IV and Pt. II as Vol. V. The publisher, Sri B.L. Bansal, suggested that both be brought under a single volume. I agreed because both the volumes were moderate in size. Corinna Wessels-Mevissen has written a book on "Gods of the Directions" in about 130 pages (book 29 x 22 cms size) with more than 300 photographic evidences. Her study has no geographical delimitation though it covers the period down to c. A.D. 1000. In the wonderful study, the data bearing on early medieval is 30 pages. There are few books on Gaṇapati, Skanda and Brahmā but none has a special bearing on the early medieval quota of contribution.

During the present tenure, I attended conferences both at home and abroad. At home I was at Madurai, Dharwad, Srisailam and New Delhi. Abroad I was in Hong Kong (1991, later in 1993). Having completed the project, few papers were presented in conferences at Bangkok (1996), Colombo (2000) and Mauritius (2001). The visit to Germany (1997) helped much to improve the quality of the work. After completing the project several conferences were attended at home; e.g. Hyderabad, Nagpur, Lucknow, Tirupati, Udupi, Pune and Kalady. Few articles were published in felicitation volumes (e.g. Pierre Sylvain-Filliozat et al. Eds. *Pandit R.N. Bhatt Felicitation Volume*, Delhi 1994; K.K. Chakravarti and O.P. Misra Eds. *The Bounteous Tree: Treasures in Indian Art and Culture*, Delhi 1997; K.M. Suresh et al. Eds. *Hemakūṭa: Recent Researches in Archaeology and Indology*, Delhi 2001) and few more forthcoming. Since 1990 to this day articles were published in *East and West, Annali, Acta Orientalia, South Asian Studies* and *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (JRAS)*. Two books were reviewed in the *JRAS*. Besides my colleagues and students have published a number of articles in the *East and West, Annali* and *South Asian Studies*. Most of these articles have a direct relevance to the area of the present study. A research that was inaugurated in 1984 continues to be a living problem today. I hope it will continue to be so in future.

Eventually, I would like to thank all those were of help to me in the present venture. A project begun in 1984 reached fruition in 1992 and is published in 2006. To rerecord, I thank the UGC, ICHR, DAAD (Bonn), Institut für Indische Philologie und Kunsgeschchete of the Freie Universität Berlin, AIIS, French Institute of Indology at Pondichery, ASI, the Adyar Library and all others who helped me with money, material or both. R.K. Parthiban did all the line drawings (to begin with manually) and later in the computer, basing on earlier models by George Michell, Susan L. Huntington and ASI. If any individual or institution is left behind, I request them to bear with me. I thank one and all.

1992 (redrafted in 2006) RAJU KALIDOS

Abbreviations

Literature

ACI	*Tiruvāciriyam*
Akam.	*Akaṉāṉūṟu*
AL	*Ānandalaharī*
AMA	*Amalaṉātipirāṉ*
AND	*Tiruppaḷḷāṇṭu*
CAN	*Tiruccantaviruttam*
Cilampu.	*Cilappatikāram*
CTML	*Ciṟiya Tirumaṭal*
DeviM.	*Devīmāhātmyam*
DK	*devakuḷika*
ELU	*Tiruveḻukūṟṟirukkai*
Kali.	*Kalittokai*
KUR	*Tirukkuṟuntāṇṭakam*
LSN	*Lalitāsahasranāma*
MAL	*Tirumālai*
Mani.	*Maṇimēkalai*
MOLI	*Tiruvāymoḻi*
NAC	Nāccaiyār *Tirumoḻi*
NED	*Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam*
NTV	*Nāṉmukaṉ Tiruvantāti*
Pari.	*Paripāṭal*
PAV	*Tiruppāvai*
PET	*Perumāl Tirumoḻi*
PEYT	Pēyāḻvār *Tiruvantāti*
POYT	Poykaiāḻvār *Tiruvantāti*

PTI	Periyāḻvār *Tirumoḻi*
PTM	*Periya Tirumoḻi*
PTML	*Periya Tirumaṭal*
Puram.	*Puṟanāṉūṟu*
PUTT	Pūtattāḻvār *Tiruvantāti*
SL	*Saundaryalaharī*
Tol. Porul	*Tolkāppiyam-Poruḷatikāram*

Epigraphical

ARE	*Annual Reports on Epigraphy*
IA	*Indian Antiquary*
CII	*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*
EC	*Epigraphia Carnatica*
EI	*Epigraphia Indica*
MI	*Mysore Inscriptions*
SII	*South Indian Inscriptions*
SITI	*South Indian Temple Inscriptions*
TPCP	*Thirty Pallava Copper Plates*

Others

Pl.	Plate
CI. Pl.	Colour Plate
Fig(fig)	Figure (figure)

Note: The common abbreviations such as *op. cit.* are those internationally followed. Others designed for the work have been explained on the context itself.

List of Illustrations

Photographic Credit (marked within parentheses)

AIIS	American Institute of Indian Studies
FII	French Institute of Indology
RKKR	R.K.K. Rajarajan
AS	A. Sundara

Others by the author

Colour

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CHAPTER - I

Sources

Piṭiyataṉ uruvumai koḷamiku kariyatu
Vaṭikoṭutaṉataṭi vaḻipaṭumavariṭar
Kaṭikaṇapati varavaruḷiṉaṉ mikukoṭai
Vaṭiviṉar payilvali valamuṟaiyiṟaiyē (*Tēvāram* 1:123:5).

'O Lord of Vālīśvaram, you were born to Śiva and Umā who mated assuming the form of male and female elephants; you remove the obstacles of your devotees who adore you (with utmost reverence) and lead a charitable life'.

Gaṇapati and Skanda are supposed to be the elder and younger sons of Śiva and Umādevī, and in popular Hinduism all four constitute a family. In southern Śaivite tradition there are *pañcamūrtis* 'five gods' within the bigger Śaiva family. Among them the first is Śiva, followed by Devī, Gaṇapati, Skanda (T. Murukaṉ) and Caṇḍikeśvara. Gaṇapati and Skanda or Kārttikeya are supposed to be sons of Śiva and Devī not by virtue of fact that they were born by sexual union. Gaṇapati was created by Devī from a lump of her bodily impurities and posted as a sentry to guard her holy residence. He was first and foremost among the *gaṇas* 'demi-gods', attending on higher ones, and so called the *pati* 'Lord' of *gaṇas*, Gaṇapati. Though a dependent deity within the family of Śiva, the cult of Gaṇapati developed into an independent faction as one among the *ṣaṇmatas* 'six religions' (T. *aṟuvakaiccamayam*) and came to be known as Gāṇāpatyam. Similarly, the cult of Kumāra (T. Murukaṉ) became independent and was called Kaumāram. Both are supreme deities within their own pantheon to whom even great gods like Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā became subordinate and myths to the effect evolved in course of the medieval period.

Though Gaṇapati is considered to be the first-born of Śiva-Umā, historically he appears at a later stage within the Hindu pantheon. On the other hand, the younger son, Kumāra, appears earlier. Sources bearing on both the gods are available, at an early date in case of Skanda and at a later date in case of Gaṇapati. Skanda's antiquity is traced back to the days of Mohenjodaro and the *Vedas*.[1] In Tamil the earliest text to speak about Murukaṉ (called Cēyōṉ) is the *Tolkāppiyam*, assigned to the pre-Christian era, may be 250 B.C. In Caṅkam works we obtain a copious picture of the personality, character and worship of Murukaṉ. In the *bhakti* literature of the Nāyaṉmār, Murukaṉ appears quite often. But in case of Gaṇapati it is not so. The *Tolkāppiyam* and other Caṅkam works have no reference to the name and Gaṇapati is not mentioned anywhere. The earliest note perhaps is the one cited at the commencement of this chapter. It is by Tiruñāṉacampantar, first among the *Tēvāram*-trio, dated in the early 7th century A.D.

There are two streams in respect of the cults of both Gaṇapati and Skanda, viz., the northern (Sanskrit) and southern (Tamil). The roots of Skanda are traced back to the *Vedas* and that of Gaṇapati to the *Upaniṣads*. By about the 5th century A.D. the earliest solid evidences of Gaṇapati and Kumāra in art appear, found *in situ* (e.g., Udayagiri caves of the Guptas). How these two channels get mixed up? is one of the vexed questions in Indian religious and artistic tradition. From about the 5th century A.D. onwards both streams unite like the Gaṅgā and Kāviri and flow harmoniously.

I

Eventhough scholars are unanimously of the opinion that there is no trace of Gaṇapati in the earliest stratum of Tamil culture, i.e., the Caṅkam Age, the eminent scholar, M. Arunachalam, has attempted to trace the roots of the cult in a literature of the period, called *Puṟanāṉūṟu*.[2] There is a reference to a God in *Puṟanāṉūṟu* (v. 106) who is connected with *erukku* (*Calotropis gigantea*), a poisonous herb. The God, according to M. Arunachalam, is Gaṇapati. The concerned verse runs as follows:

Nallavum tīyavum alla kuviyiṇarp
Pullilai erukkam āyiṉum uṭaiyavai
Kaṭavuḷ pēṇēm eṉṉā āṅku
Maṭavar melliyar collilum
Kaṭalaṉ Pāri kai vaṇmaiyē

"The gods would not decline to receive even the *erukku* with the ignoble leaves from any one although they do not come under the two categories of flowers, good and bad, which are worn on the hair. In like manner even when persons who are not wise or who are not virtuous go to him (Pāri, the great philanthropist), his generosity does not get stinted" (tr. M. Arunachalam, parenthesis mine).

The *erukku* in Tamil tradition is connected with only two gods. They are Śiva and Gaṇapati. The Nāyaṉmār have frequent references to the eight flowers, adoring Śiva's coiffeur, called *aṭṭamāmalar* (*Tēvāram* 5:123:4 and 5:200:9), *eṭṭunaṉmalar* (5:168:1) or *aṭṭapuṭpam* (5:168:10) (Skt. *aṣṭapuṣpa*). There are specific references to *Veḷḷerukku* 'the white *erukku*' (5:193:1, 1:130:5) in association with Śiva. Similarly, Gaṇapati is offered a garland of *erukku* flowers and worshipped. It is done even now at the time of Viṇāyaka-*Caturthi*, celebrated in the Tamil month of *Āṭi* (Skt. *Āṣāḍha*, July-August). Again, images of Gaṇapati made of the sturdy roots of *erukku* are supposed to be especially meritorious. Such an image is worshipped even now in the Tiruvalañcuḷi temple. Being made of *veḷḷerukku*, he is called Veḷḷaippiḷḷaiyār; Piḷḷaiyar is the Tamil name of Gaṇapati (Cf. Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi *infra* chap. IV). The learned scholar, M. Arunachalam, opines that the God associated with *erukku* in the *Puṟanāṉūṟu* verse, quoted above, is none other than Gaṇapati.[3] The arguments presented by the scholar are indeed thought provoking.

N. Subrahmanian suggested that the Gaṇapati cult was familiar with the Tamils of the Caṅkam age.[4] He takes into account the *Cilappatikāram*, a post-Caṅkam work, which he considers Caṅkam. The literature speaks of a *kāvalteyvam* 'guardian deity' who is called Peruñcatukkapūtam 'the great demon of the square'. He was posted in the ancient port-city of the Cōḻas, Pukār. His duty was to punish offenders. He had a *pāśa* in hand. He also possessed the *vajrāyudha*. He had a seat on the cross-road. The Catukkapūtam of Pukār is associated with Gaṇapati because the latter was Bhūtanātha or Gaṇanātha, a status that the former commanded. There was a poet of the Caṅkam period called Peruñcatukkattu Pūtanātar. The Cēra king, Iḷañcēral Iṟumpoṟai, according to the *Cilappatikāram* (28:147-48) and *Patiṟṟuppattu* (IX Ten, *patikam*) is said to have introduced the said cult in his capital at Vañci. It is the "beginning of Gaṇapati cult" in Tamilnadu, according to N. Subrahmanian.

To sum up the findings of both the scholars, the following ideas come out: (1) There was a God or gods connected with *erukku*. (2) A God occupied the cross-roads and punished offenders. (3) The latter possessed the *pāśa* and *vajra* in his hands. In spite of the plausible connections of the *erukku*-God with Gaṇapati, nothing relating to his emblems or qualities is mentioned in the literature. The reference is rather too vague. The deity, holding the *pāśa* and *vajra*, need not necessarily be Gaṇapati or his nearest equal. The *vajra* though associated with Murukaṉ and earlier with Indra is never an emblem of Gaṇapati in any known form, noted in texts (*infra*) or monumental evidences.[5] The *pāśa* again is not an exclusive symbol of Gaṇapati. One seated at cross-roads need not necessarily be Gaṇapati. Nor one who punishes evil-mongers should be Gaṇapati. These are qualities of the gods in general; good examples being Śiva as Gajasaṁhāramūrti, Andhakārī or Kālasaṁhāramūrti, Viṣṇu as he did on several occasions during Kṛṣṇāvatāra and Devī as Mahiṣāsuramardinī. In spite of all these objections, it may be pointed out that during the Caṅkam age a God akin to Gaṇapati was perhaps known. He need not have been the elephant-headed one, supposed to be the son of Śiva and Umā.

Tiruñāṉacampantar, the junior-most poet and mystic among the *Tēvāram*-trio, the other two being Tirunāvukkaracar and Cuntarar, provides the earliest evidences of Gaṇapati in literature. The verse, cited at the commencement of the article, mentions the name Kaṇapati (Skt. Gaṇapati) who was born to Śiva and Umā when they had a sexual intercourse, disguised as elephants. The mythological anecdote gives a hint regarding the birth of Gaṇapati. He is called the God who removes obstacles, Vighneśvara or Vighnarāja. In another hymn, the same poet refers to the elephantine head of the God, *kariyiṉ māmukamatuṭaiya Kaṇapati* (2:232:3). The verse adds that Gaṇapati was one among the *bhūtas (gaṇas)*, which constituted the army of Śiva. There are few more references to Gaṇapati in the hymns of the same poet. He refers to the Tirucceṅkāṭṭaṅkuṭi (Tañcāvūr district) temple as Kaṇapatiyīccaram (Skt. Gaṇapatīśvaram) (1:7:1-6, 8-10). In another decad, the place is linked with Ciṟuttoṇṭaṉ, one among the sixty-three Nāyaṉmār, and called *Ciṟuttoṇṭaṉ-kaṇapatiyīccaram* (3:321:2). The hymn connects Ciṟuttoṇṭar with Tirucceṅkāṭṭaṅkuṭi where the devotee is said to have spent his life serving Śiva *bhaktas*. In Tamil tradition, Ciṟuttoṇṭar is supposed to have served the army of the Pallava king Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ I, invaded Vāṭāpi (Badāmī), brought an image of Gaṇapati (and so called Vātāpi-Gaṇapati) and installed it at Tirucceṇkāṭṭaṅkuṭi. In the concerned hymns, nothing relating to the episode is found. The place is called Gaṇapatīśvaram, maybe a temple established by Gaṇapati for Īśvara existed there, where Ciṟuttoṇṭar lived happily, serving Śaiva mendicants. Even the *Periya Purāṇam* (12th century A.D.), which makes him known as a distinguished Śaiva *bhakta*, says nothing about his devotion to Gaṇapati.

Tirunāvukkaracar, a senior contemporary of Nāṉacampantar, adds to our knowledge of Gaṇapati, in not less than half a dozen places. Gaṇapati is called an elephant, *kaṇapati eṉṉum kaḷiṟu* (4:2:5). In Hindu tradition Gaṇapati is not only the God who removes or lays obstacles but also the God of Wisdom. The aspect is hinted in a hymn. The elephantine God is said to be an embodiment of wisdom, *ñāṉamatākiya naṉkuṇa Āṉaiyār* (5:151:3). The Lord is called Āṉaiyār, one of the elephant form. The epithets, Kaḷiṟu and Āṉaiyār, offer clues to the zoomorphic form of the God. His *vighna* aspect is noted in another hymn and called Vikkiṇavināyakaṉ (6:227:10). The hymn actually is in praise of Śiva-Naṭarāja among whose retinue Vighna-Viṇayaka is said to be a member. The verse runs as follows:

> *kōvāyavintiranuḷḷiṭṭarāka Kumaraṉum vikkiṉavināyakaṉum Pūvāyapīṭattu mēl*
> *Ayaṉṉum Pūmiyaḷantāṉum pōṟṟicappap Pāvāyaviṉṉicaikaḷ pāṭiyāṭi ...*

'The king of Gods Indra and his associates (the *aṣṭadikpālakas*), Kumāra (Skanda), Vighna-Vināyaka, one who is seated on a pedestal of a (lotus) flower (i.e., Brahmā) called Ayaṉ, one who measured the earth (Trivikrama, i.e., Viṣṇu); all praise you my Lord (Dancer) by singing and dancing ...'

In this important reference, it is stated that Naṭarāja dances to the tune of a host of attendant gods who are Indra and the *dikpālakas*, Kumāra, Gaṇapati, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and others. It is very striking because there are such plastic illustrations in the cave temples of Elephanta and Ellora and the structural temples of Alampūr. The famous Naṭarāja in Cave I Badāmī is of the type. The Lord is called Āṉaimukaṉ (Skt. Gajamukha) who was the son of Śiva and who killed a demon with an elephant face, called *kayācuraṉ* (Skt. Gajāsura) (6:288:7). In another hymn the name Vināyakaṉ is noted (6:291:8).

Cuntarar, third among the *Tēvāram* authors, has only two allusions to Gaṇapati within a range of 1,100 and odd hymns sung by him. In both the poems (7:52:2, 7:46:9), the author refers to the big belly of Gaṇapati, *peruvayiṟaṉ Kaṇapati*.

The hymns of the early Nāyaṉmār provide excellent clues regarding Gaṇapati as a cult deity but no iconographical information is supplied. In the connection, a work of the *bhakti* period, called *Kallāṭam* is of much value. Some assign it to the 7th century A.D. and others to the later medieval period (i.e., the 10th century A.D.). Pending the question of date, it may be added that it presents a new perspective of Gaṇapati that has to bear on his iconographical features. It is important to note that the verses on Gaṇapati constitute the invocatory part of the text. The tradition of commencing a work with an invocation to Gaṇapati is of the later medieval tradition. And yet there is an ancient poem which in palm-leaf manuscripts on Caṅkam poetry is usually added as the invocatory poem. M. Arunachalam taking into due account the archaic nature of the verse assigns it to the early centuries of the Christian era. It notes the word *kaḷiṟu* 'elephant', which is likely to be a reference to the elephant-headed God.[6] A post-Caṅkam work,called *Aintiṇaieḻupatu*, one among the Eighteen Minor Works (*Patineṇkīḻkkaṇakku*),[7] consists of an invocatory verse in praise of Gaṇapati but on the basis of its style and diction it is pushed to a later date. M. Arunachalam also mentions other works like *Vināyakar Tiruiraṭṭaimaṇimālai* by Nampiāṇṭār Nampi (11th century A.D.), *Mūttanāyaṉār Tiruiraṭṭaimaṇimālai* by Kapiladeva Nāyaṉār (10th century A.D.) and *Mūtta Piḷḷaiyār Tirumaṇikkōvai* by Atiraaṭikaḷ (8th century A.D.), all on Gaṇapati. These evidences stand proof of the fact that by about the 8th century A.D. Gaṇapati had attained a status of eminence in the Tamil society.[8]

The *Kallāṭam* (invocatory verse) is copious in its perspective of iconographical features. The Lord's cheeks are full of fury, dotted with moles, which produce the saliva of madness. He is *trinetra* 'three eyed'. His tusks shine like the crescent, fallen on summits of a mountain. He is supposed to wear *kuḻai* 'ear rings', which remain not tossed. The Lord's proboscis breathed so heavily that the air produced by it dislodged the elephant-headed demon, *gajamukhāsura* (T. *āmpaṉmuka arakkaṉ*) and his associates. He is said to have circumambulated Śiva and obtained from him the fruit (of knowledge) as a prize. He is the Lord who considers the prayers and troubles of his devotees and fulfills their aspirations. By virtue of the fact he came to be called Vighneśvara or Vighnarāja. The *Gaṇapatiaṣṭtottram* invokes him with the epithet, *Vighnarājāya-namaḥ* 'praised be the Lord who removes obstacles'.

From the vague reference to Gaṇapati in Caṅkam literature, pertaining to *erukku* and Peruñcatukkapūtam, we pass on to the literature of the *bhakti* age. It is in the latter phase that we obtain a fair picture of the myth and iconography of Gaṇapati. Of the mythological events, the following are worthy of note:

1. Gaṇapati was born to Śiva and Umā when both mated assuming the form of male and female elephants respectively.
2. The Lord Śiva as Naṭarāja included a host of attendant gods and goddesses among whom one was Vināyaka.

3. Gaṇapati was the one who blew up a demon with elephant head, *gajamukhāsura*, and killed him.
4. Gaṇapati circumambulated Śiva and obtained the fruit of wisdom. According to later day mythology, Śiva organised a contest between his sons to the effect that one who circumambulates the worlds will be rewarded with a fruit. Kumāra started flying around the worlds, seated on his peacock, while Gaṇapati circumambulated his own parents and got the prize; the lesson being there is no world beyond one's own parents.

The names of Gaṇapati are Kaṇapati, Vināyakaṉ, Vikkiṉaṉ (Vighnarāja), Āṉaiyār, Kaḷiṟu and Peṟuvayiṟaṉ. Kaiḷiṟu is perhaps the earliest epithet. He was the Lord of Wisdom, maybe due to the fact that he eat the fruit. Gaṇapati is said to be three-eyed who wears the *kuḻai* in ears. His cheeks were dotted with moles and that the mouth was mad with the saliva that made him so. The tradition of invoking the Muse (Gaṇapati) starts with *Aintiṇaieḻupatu* and *Kallāṭam*.

Coming to the purāṇic literature, which deal at length with the *saṁbhava* 'birth' and exploits of Gaṇapati,[9] certain of the episodes deserve comparison with the data so far supplied. The *Liṅga Purāṇa* speaks of the story of a resentment made by the gods to Śiva. The *asuras* who had grown powerful by virtue of their boons were tormenting the worlds and there was a need to control them by laying obstacles on their war-like moves. Śiva created Vighneśvara to throw obstacles on the way of the wicked and remove the impediments faced by the virtuous and the righteous. According to the *Śiva Purāṇa* it was Devī who created a charming door-keeper to keep vigil at her doorstep and be her exclusive orderly. The boy was audacious enough to forbid the entry of the Lord Himself who in a fit of anger cut his head and later when requested by Devī ordered the refitting of an elephantine head who became Gajānana 'first among elephants' and Gaṇadhyakṣa 'foremost among elephants'.[10] The *Suprabhedāgama* narrates the interesting story of Śiva and Umā dallying in the form of elephants after having witnessed the erotic plays of two elephants. The result was the birth of a son in elephantine form. The version of the story is in tune with what Tiruñāṉacampantar notes in his *Tēvāram*. The *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* considers Gaṇapati a manifestation of Viṣṇu's *avatāra* as Kṛṣṇa. The *Mahābhārata* relates the story of how Gaṇapati served Vyāsa as a scribe to write the notes dictated by the sage. He cut his own tusk and used it as a pencil. The *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* explains the names of Gaṇapati. *Ekadanta* 'one tusked one' is a pointer to the Lord's strength and symbolises his status as the Supreme Being. *Heraṁbha* means 'Protector of the Weak'. *Lambodara* would point out his quality of being fat or big-belly. The winnow-like ears fan away the troubles of devotees as well as being a symbol of wisdom. As leader of the righteous, he is *Vināyaka*. Otherwise, being born of no father (*nāyaka*), he is said to be Vināyaka according to the *Vāmana Purāṇa*.

Epigraphical sources, bearing on the cult and iconographical aspects of Gaṇapati, are not copious. We have rare allusions in which Gaṇapati figures prominently, especially in later medieval period. Among the early references one from the Bhairavakoṇḍa caves is of exceptional merit. The inscription in Telugu characters of the 8th century A.D., belonging to Vikramāditya, refers to the temple for Bhairava, which notes the setting up of Gaṇapati, Nandīśvara and Daṇḍīśvara (= Caṇḍikeśvara) images (*EI* XXXIII, pp.79-81). It may be noted here (*infra* Chap. III) that almost all caves of Bhairavakoṇḍa consist of images of Gaṇapati (right), Caṇḍikeśvara (left) and Naṇdi in zoomorphic form (centre) at the *façade* level. The Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam inscription (*EI* XXXVI, pp. 114-17), dated in Kali 3874 (8th century A.D.), in addition to recording the renovations to the cave temple (north group) gives the name of the donor, called Cāttaṅkaṇapati (Cāttaṉ + Gaṇapati) which means the popularity of the Gaṇapati cult so that the name is adopted by persons. Invocations to Gaṇapati as in case of Śiva, Viṣṇu and Devī (e.g., Hārītī, Sarasvatī and others see Vol. III) do not appear in early inscriptions. However, later in the 9th-10th centuries we do come across epigraphs of such type. For example, a grant of Cāmuṇḍarāja, a subordinate of Silahāra Chhinturāja, dated in Śaka 856, has an invocation to Gaṇanāyaka as follows:

> "(Siddham) jayaś-ch: ā bhyudaya's - cha//Labhate sarvvakāryeṣu pūjāyā Gaṇanāyakaḥ/vighna(ṁ) nighaṁ (ghnan)sa vaḥ pāyād Gaṇanayakaḥ//" (*EI* XXXII, p. 66).

This inscription refers to the Vignarāja aspect of the Lord who is said to remove the obstacles. Few later medieval inscriptions of the kings of Āndhradeśa (e.g., Ekāṁranātha inscription of Gaṇapati, dated Śaka 1172, and another grant of Gaṇadeva of Koṇḍavīḍu, dated Śaka 1377) invoke Gaṇapati. The Ekāṁranātha inscription runs as follows:

> "Let the power (Gaṇeśa) which has the face of a rutting elephant, and which has sucked the breast of Pārvatī, the daughter of the mountain, whose milk was tasted, produce happiness" (*IA* XXI, p. 201).

The Regav copper plates of Mahārānaka Kīrtivarmaṉ, dated in the Cheḍi year 926, invokes Heraṁbha (Gaṇapati) as follows:

> "Om Svasti Amodaścha pramoda's cha sumukho durmmukhas-tadā(thā)/avighno vighna-karttā cha helamvo(mbo) Gaṇanāyakaḥ/" (*IA* XVII, p. 226).

Gaṇapati's Vaiṣṇava counterpart, Viśvaksena, appears in inscriptions of the Vijayanagara epoch. Good examples are the Dalavāy Agrahāram Plates of Veṅkaṭapatideva Mahārāja I, dated in Śaka 1508 (*EI* XII, p. 185) and Kuniyūr Plates of Veṅkaṭa II (*EI* III, p. 251). The Kōṭṭayam Plate of Vīra Rāghava Chakravarti of Kerala (*IA* LIII, p. 185) contains the beautiful invocation 'Hari Śrī Mahāgaṇapate namaḥ'.

Later day *āgamas* and *śilpaśāstras* speak of a number of forms of Gaṇapati, not less than 32 are accounted in the *Śrītattvanidhi*. T.A. Gopinatha Rao states that mostly Gaṇapati is with two eyes while the *āgamas* prescribe for him three eyes. This aspect has been noted in the *Kallāṭam*. The image is either seated, standing or dancing. Names of the 32 Gaṇapatis are Bāla-, Taruṇa-, Bhakta-, Vīra-, Śakti-, Dvija-, Siddhita-, Ucchiṣṭa-, Kṣipra-Heraṁba-, Lakṣmī-, Mahāvighneśvara-, Vajaya-, Kalpa-, Nṛtta-, Ūrdhavavighneśa-, Ekākṣara-, Vara-, Trayakṣara-, Kṣīpradāyaka, Haridrā-, Ekadanta-, Mṛdhṛṣṭi-, Uddāṇḍa-, Ṛṇamocana-, Ḍuṇḍi-, Dvimukha-, Trimukha-, Siṁha-, Yoga-, Durga- and Saṅkaṭahara- all names suffixed with the common genre, Gaṇapati. The *Śrītattvanidhi*, (I:3:70-101) quotes the *Muḍgala Purāṇa* as source of its authority. The iconographical featurs of all 32 are elaborated in the text one by one. Though of a later date, it may be of some help to identify the types known to the early medieval society, briefly enumerated in the following account.

The number of hands range from two to sixteen, mostly in even numbers though seven of them are said to be five-handed, *aiṅkaraṉ* (*pañcabhuja*). There are four of eight-handed ones, eleven of four-handed, two of six-handed, two of ten-handed, one of twelve-handed and one of sixteen-handed. There is one of seven-handed. Though Gaṇapati is mostly of the *caturbhuja* type, the *Muḍgala Purāṇa* associates not less than fifty emblems with the Lord's *hastas*. He being a gluttonous person, several varieties of fruits and eatables are attributed to him. They are *kadalī* (plantain), *cyūta* (mango), *panasa* (jack fruit), *kapittha* (wood-apple), *jambu* (rose-apple), *ikṣu* (sugarcane), *narikelaṁ* (coconut), *modakam*, *apūpa* (a sweet cake), *guḍa* (jaggery), *pāyasam* (sweet porridge), *tilamodakaṁ* (a sweet cake made of jingily seeds) and *laḍḍukam* (pancake). Flowers, sprouts and creepers are associated. They are *śālī* (bunch of paddy crop), *puṣpabandha* (bunch of flowers), *nīlotphala* (white lily), *padma* (lotus), *puṣpabāṇa* (arrow of flowers), *kalhāram* (red lily) and *kalpalatā* (a bough of the wish-fulfilling tree). Among the weapons are *śakti*, *bāṇa*, *dhanus*, *pāśa*, *aṅkuśa*, *vetāla*, *cakra*, *khaḍga*, *khaṭvaṅga*, *muḍgara*, *gadā*, *nāga*, *śūla*, *kuntam*, *paraśu*, *triśūla* and *madhumat-kapālam* (skull of wine). Other emblems are *danta*, *dvaja*, *puṣtaka*, *vīṇā*, *śukha* (parrot), *ratnakalaśa*, *japamālā* (*yoga*), *danta* and *kamaṇḍalū*. The *mudrās* associated are *abhaya* and *varada*. From these emblems, it may be understood that Gaṇapati was endowed with various *guṇāṁśas*. To begin with he was the God of Obstacles, one who lays them or eradicates the same. He was the Lord of Wisdom. He acquires by power of meditation as pointed out by few of the emblems, characteristic of Yogīśvaramūrtis (e.g., *kamaṇḍalū*, *akṣamālā* and *yogadaṇḍa*). His elephantine character endows him with the qualities of steadfastness since the "elephant passes through the wilderness, treading shrubs, bending and uprooting trees, fording rivers and lakes easily".[12] The various eatables associated with the Lord and his pot-bellied nature make him the God of plenty and prosperity. "Paunchy and well-off, he is the bestower of earthly prosperity and well being".[13] The weapons make him a *raudra-mūrti* who could cause the fall of evil-mongers like Gajamukhāsura or mischief-players like the Lord Śiva Himself.

II

'Maṉaṉēr peḻutaru vāṉiṟa mukaṉē
Māyiru ñālaṉ maṟuviṉṟi viḷaṅkap
Palkatir virintaṉ ṟorumukam orumukam
Ārvalar ētta amarntiṉi toḻukik
Kātaliṇ uvantu varaṅkoṭut taṉṟē orumukam
Mantira vitiyiṉ marapuḷi vaḻāa
Antaṇar vēḷviyōrk kummē orumukam
Eñciya poruḷkaḷai ēmuṟa nāṭit
Tiṅkaḷ pōlat ticaiviḷak kummē orumukam
Ceṟunart tēyttuc celcama murukkik
Kaṟuvukoḷ neñcamoṭu kaḷmamvēṭṭanṟē orumukam
Kuṟavar maṭamakaḷ koṭipōl nucuppiṉ
Maṭavaral vaḷḷiyoṭu nakaiyamarn taṉṟē
Āṅkam, mūviru mukaṉum ...'
(*Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* 11. 90-103)
"His radiant faces six abide in the hearts
Of votaries who perform their pleasant vows,
One face diffuses countless rays of light
Removing from the world its darkness dense.
Another face, because its devotees
Do praise him, casts on them a gracious look
And grants the boon for which they pray with love
And joy. A third is on the watch to guard
The sacrifices Brahmin priests perform,
Who never sever from practising the rites
The *Vedas* four ordain. A fourth doth search
The hidden truths and light the sages' minds.
A fifth, representing his impartial mind,
With a raging heart destroys his hated foes
And celebrates the victory gained by rites
Performed in battle-field. The sixth face loves
To enjoy itself with Vaḷḷi, consort young,
The pretty daughter of the hunting tribes,
Whose waist is slender like creeper thin.
As these six faces do their proper work ..."
(tr. J.V. Chelliah, 1962, p. 347).

Murukaṉ, the Tamil God of the *Kuṟiñci* tract of land,[14] is variously known as Vēlaṉ, Kantaṉ (Skt. Skanda), Kumaraṉ (Skt. Kumāra), Āṟumukaṉ 'six faced' (Skt. Ṣaṇmukha), Kārttikēyaṉ (Skt. Kārttikeya), Kukaṉ (Skt. Guha), Mayilōṉ (Skt.Sikhivāhana), Cuppaiyaṉ, Āṇṭi 'begger' (Skt. = ?), Taṇṭapāṇi 'Wilder of Staff', Kaṭampaṉ, Vaḷḷimaṇāḷaṉ 'husband of Vaḷḷi', Mālmarukaṉ 'son-in-law of Māl (Viṣṇu)', Saravaṇaṉ, Subrahmaṇya, Devasenāpati, and so on.[15] The folk names of the God are innumerable (e.g., Paḻaṉiāṇṭi, Paḻaṉiappaṉ, Kōlappaṉ 'wilder of staff', Kōvanāṇṭi, Moṭṭaiāṇṭi, Mayilcāmi etc.) and attest the popularity of the cult of Murukaṉ in the Tamil country. The six important abodes (*aṟupaṭaivīṭu* 'six barracks') of the Lord are Paḻaṉi, Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, Paḻamutircōlai, Tiruccentūr (all in Pāṇḍya country), Svāmimalai (Cōḻanāḍu) and Tiruttaṇi (Toṇḍainādu).[16] In the recent past a number of places have grown in importance as centres of Murukaṉ cult. They are Kantakkōṭṭam (in Chennai), Kumarakkōṭṭam (in Kāñcīpuram), Ceyyar (Kandasvāmi), Vaḷḷimalai, Tiruppattūr (Muttukkumāra), Naccatrakōyil, Dharmapuri (Kumaraṉ), Eṇkaṇ, Puñcai Pukalūr (Bālasubrahmaṇya), Kuṉṉakkuṭi, Puḷiyaṅkuṭi, Kaḻukumalai (Kaḻukācalamūrti), Paṉpoḻi (Tirumalai-Kumāra), Kaḷḷiṭaikkuṟicci and several others. It is in the Koṅgunāḍu region (m. Coimbatore-Salem districts) that a concentration of temples for Kumaraṉ is found. To mention a few: Mēṭṭuppāḷayam, Śivaṉmalai, Veḷḷakōyil, Aḻakumalai, Malaikkōyil (Kuḻantai Vēlāyudha), Iṟumpaṟai, Tirumurukaṉpūṇṭi (Tirumurukanātha), Marutamalai (Bālasubrahmaṇya), Ciravaṇapuram (Daṇḍayudhapāṇi), Kiṇattukkaṭavu (Poṉamalai Vēlāyudha), Ceñcērimalai (Mandiragiri Vēlāyudha), Ceṉṉimalai, Śivagiri (Kanakagiri Vēlāyudha),[17] and so on. Murukaṉ in Tamil tradition is the God of beauty and love, heroism and romanticism. He combines in himself the qualities of Śiva and Śakti and in the Somāskanda form it is Skanda who is more important than the other two. The Lord unites within his own personality the *guṇāṁśas* of Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Devī, Indra (representing the *dikpālakas*) and by appropriating the 'Fruit of Knowledge' from Gaṇapati, Murukaṉ poses to be the sum total of all gods and goddesses. The popularity of the cult of Kumāra (Kaumāram) in Tamil culture is immense.

Murukaṉ is a God familiar with the Tamil tradition since time immemorial. The *Tolkāppiyam*, datable to *c.* 250 B.C., assigned by scholars like S. Ilakkuvanar to 1000 B.C. mentions Cēyōṉ (Murukaṉ) as god of *Kuṟiñci*. In the earliest stratum of Tamil literature, called Caṅkam, Murukaṉ appears quite often, which presents a panoramic picture of the character and personality of the God. The myths associated with him and iconographical aspects in addition to the cult are very well stated. Scholars like Kamil V. Zvelebil (*vide.*, *Tiru Murugan*, Madras 1981) have made the commendable effort to trace the autochthonous elements as well as the intrusion of Sanskritic ideas behind a syncretistic deity called Skanda (T. Kantaṉ) who was to begin with Cēyōṉ, Cevvēḷ or Murukaṉ in Tamiḻkūṟumnallulakam 'the good world where nice Tamiḻ is spoken'.

Among the earliest literary works, which allude to Murukaṉ are *Naṟṟiṇai* (vv. 7, 34,268, 359, 367 and 373), *Kuruntokai* (vv.1, 52, 105 and 376) and *Akanāṉūṟu* (vv. 32, 59, 91, 98, 158, 162, 198, 297, 303, 304, 359 etc.), datable to the early centuries of the Christian era and "some of them may be even older".[18] *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* and *Paripāṭal* (5 out of 22) have special bearing on Murukaṉ. These two texts are usually clustered with the Caṅkam classics of the early Christian era but in recent times scholars push them back to the 3rd-4th centuries A.D. Among the Tamil epics, the *Cilappatikāram* (post-Caṅkam but pre-Pallava, maybe 5th century A.D.) presents a good peep into the subject. The *bhakti* literature of the early Nāyaṉmār (Ñāṉacampantar, Appar and Cuntarar, authors of first 7 *Tirumuṟais*) have very little to say when compared with the early group of literature. In *Kallāṭam* a picture akin to that of *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* is found.

Regarding the personality of Murukaṉ in early Tamil literature, Kamil V. Zvelebil in his work cited above has presented an eloquent picture. He has shown how the original God of the *kuṟiñci* tract in Tamil Nadu mingled with the Sanskritic Skanda by about the time of *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*. From the 4th century A.D. onwards, it is the syncretistic Skanda-Murukaṉ who figures prominently.[19] Murukaṉ continues to be a hero of Tamil literary tradition down to the 15th century and later, and in spite of the Sanskritic ideological inflow, the Tamil writers continue to give credence to the local elements in their assessment of the personality of a beloved God.

The personality of Murukaṉ as obtained from Caṅkam literature is two-fold. It may be divided into early and later. In early texts like *Kuṟuntokai, Akanāṉūṟu, Naṟṟiṇai, Maturaikkāñci, Paṭṭiṇappālai* and *Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu* the oldest version is found where in Murukaṉ is a God much feared and so worshipped. *Akanāṉūṟu* (v. 98) relates the story of a girl possessed by Vēlaṉ or Murukaṉ. Though the girl was love-sick, her mother mistakes it for possession by a divine spirit and invites the exorcist, also called Vēlaṉ, who dances whirling a spear (*vēl*) drives away the spirit, offers sacrifice of a goat and finally cures the diseased one. The wild dance is called *velaṉveṟi* 'orgiastic dance of Vēlaṉ'.[20] In order to avoid any such catastrophe, women used to visit the temple of Murukaṉ with food offering. According to the *Maturaikkāñci* (11. 610-15) women attribute their ills to Murukaṉ who wears the blossoms of *kaṭampu* (*Bavingtonia acutangula*), cf. the Lord's epithet Kaṭampaṉ. The priestess of the temple is called Cāliṉi who shares the food offered by devotees to the Lord. Besides, the *Maturaikkāñci* (1. 263) refers to the hill of Paraṅkuṉṟu (m. Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam). The *Paṭṭiṇappālai* describes a festival in honour of Murukaṉ (11. 154-59), calls the Lord *Ciṟappiṉteyvam* 'glorious God' (1. 159) and notes the oblations offered to him (11. 164-65). The port-metropolis of the ancient Cōḷas, Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṇam, was the centre where,

> " ... festivals are always held
> Harmonious with the dances wild
> Of frenzied maids by the Red-god (Cevvēl) stirred,

> The flutes do pipe, the lyres do twang,
> The drums roll loud, and the tabors sound."

It is added that the temple had a flag, adored by the mutitude (*palar toḻu koṭi*). According to the *Poruṇarāṟṟuppaṭai* Murukaṉ was a wild (angry) God. It compares Karikāla, the famous Cōḻa king of the Caṅkam age, with Murukaṉ in ferociousness. It is added that the God is one who resides in *kaṭampu* tree (*Kaṭampamar neṭuvēl* 1. 75).

To begin with Murukaṉ was the "spirit of a popular cult" according to N. Vanamamalai.[21] Kamil V. Zveḷebil has shown how he was the equivalent of *aṇaṅku*, a much maligned nymph[22] and maybe due to this character he is supposed to inhabit the *kaṭampu* tree.That is why he takes possession of girls. The *Puṟanāṉūṟu* (v. 299) speaks of *aṇaṅkuṭai*-Murukaṉ, pointing out thereby the possessive quality of the God. The *Akanāṉūṟu* (v. 98) would aver that the power of Murukaṉ is in his *aṇaṅku* character, Murukaṉ-*ār aṇaṅku* (=*anaṅgaḥ*). The *aṇaṅku*-possession is so tormenting that lovers, both men and women, feared the God's spell descending on them. They swear by the name of Murukaṉ and indulge in the excesses of love. Women separated from their husbands or lovers used to utter their prayers to Murukaṉ, soliciting his help for a happy reunion.

Besides his association with love and fear, two other native elements appearing in the early phase of Caṅkam literature are (1) extirpation of the demon, Cūr (Skt. Sūrapadma) and (2) love-making and marriage with Vaḷḷi, the Tamil counterpart of Sanskritic Devasena. The word *cūr* in early Tamil stands for 'fear' or 'terror'. Murukaṉ being the fear-creating or terror-making God, he himself overcomes the same force and thus affords protection to the world. The personification of *cūr* 'fear' is the first enemy that Murukaṉ overcomes. Later, Cūr is personified as Cūraṉ or Sūrapadma. The *Puṟanāṉūṟu* (v. 23) makes the most important reference to the destruction of the battalion of Cūr's army. To quote: *cūr navai Murukaṉ cuṟṟattaṉṉa*. In later texts like *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* and *Kanta Purāṇam* the myth came to be elaborated in the purāṇic pattern. Kamil V. Zvelebil says, "soon it began to be viewed as a *persona*, an embodiment of Evil and of Angst."

The most interesting story of Murukaṉ in Tamil tradition is his love-making with Vaḷḷi. The earliest reference occurs in *Naṟṟiṇai* (v. 82) which runs as follows: *nīyē eṉṉuḷ varutiyō nalnaṭaikkoṭicci Murukupuṇarntu iyaṉṟa Vaḷḷi pōla* "Oh you, girl of the mountain tribe whose gait is beautiful, will you come to me like Vaḷḷi who had gladly agreed to join (sexual intercourse) Muruku (i.e., Murukaṉ)" (tr. K.V. Zvelebil, 1981, p. 45; parenthes mine). Iṇ the later phase of Caṅkam literature and in post-Caṅkam works like *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai, Paripāṭal* and *Cilappatikāram* the episode goes on elaborating until it reaches maturation in the *Kanta Purāṇam* of Kacciyappa Civācāriyar (14th century A.D.).

By about the 4th century A.D. the imagery of Murukaṉ is thoroughly recast and we enter a new world through *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*. The work itself is dedicated to Murukaṉ in which a devotee who had enjoyed the sacred presence of Murukaṉ directs another (bard or devotee) to the abode of the God of which six are described. They are Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam (11. 1-77), Tiruccīralaivāy (11. 78-125), Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi (11. 126-76), Tiruērakam (11. 177-189), Kuṉṟutōrāṭal (11. 190-217) and Paḻamutircōlai (11. 218-317). New ideas such as Devasena and Tārakāsura enter into the myth-making process.

The most illuminating picture of the God is his *viśvarūpa* with six heads and twelve hands. The symbols of the polycephalous form are explained in *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*. The lengthy passage, cited at the commencement of this section of the book presents a new vision of the developing iconographical concepts. The Lord's features are described in great detail as he appears in all six centres of his cult.

Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam (11. 1-77) is said to be a place, which lies to the west of Kūṭal (m. Maturai). The name of the *sthala* as found in the text is Kuṉṟam 'hill'. The two demons dislodged by Murukaṉ are noted in the connection. One had a single body but was the combination of two, *irupēr uruviṉ orupēr yākkai* (1. 57). It is a reference to Cūr or Sūrapadma. The other allusion is to Tārakāsura who stood upside down in the form of a mango tree. It is the first time that Tārakāsura is associated with Murukaṉ. It seems in earlier tradition Tāraka was linked with Devī-Koṟṟavai.[23] Now, Skanda appropriates the idiom.

Tiruccīralaivāy (m. Tiruccentūr) was the second important centre of Murukaṉ. The Lord is supposed to ride an elephant, called Piṇimukam. He wears a beautiful crown, set with gems. He wears golden pendants in ears. The Lord is *mūvirumukaṉ* 'one with six (3 x 2) faces'. These effulgent faces function as noted below:

1. diffuses radiance and dispels darkness,
2. casts a gracious look and grants boons to devotees,
3. guards the sacrifices offered by *brāhmaṇas*,
4. discovers the hidden truths and enlightens minds of sages,
5. destroys evil (enemies),
6. loves and enjoys Vaḷḷi (*TMP*, 11. 90-103).

   The hands of the Lord are twelve in number which hold different emblems as follows:

1. pointed upward to protect *ṛṣis* treading the skypath (*sūcimudrā ?*),
2. laid upon the waist (*kaṭihasta*),
3. plies the goad (*ṭaṅka*),
4. lies upon the lap (seated image? *dhyānamudrā ?*),
5. bears a disc (*cakra ?*),
6. holds the spear (*vēl=śaktiāyudha*),
7. touching breast (*āvāhanamudrā ?*),
8. held close to the breast,

9. waves aloft (*gajahasta*) to signify battlefield-sacrifices,
10. hangs down, holding a bell (*ghaṇṭa*),
11. signifies rains pouring down and
12. adorns the maid who lives in heaven (Devasena ?) with a wedding wreath (*TMP*, 11. 126-76).

Having enumerated the qualities of the twelve hands, it is added that their functions are in conformity with what the six faces perform.

Tiruērakam is said to be a place inhabited by learned men (*brahmacārins*). The six-lettered *mantra* of the Kaumāras' (i.e., Sa Ra Va Ṇa Bha Va) is mentioned as essence of the *Vedas*.

The Lord of Kuṉṟutōrāṭal is called Vēlaṉ who wears red garments, *kaḻal* (anklets), a garland of fragrant wines on which nutmegs are strung, ornaments on shoulders and holds the flag of rooster

The Lord of Paḻamutircōlai is supposed to inhabit places in woods and groves, inlets and rivers, lakes, where roads meet (squares), beneath the shades of trees, under trees where village assemblies meet, in public halls and posts standing erect. His worshipers serve him with gifts of millet, flowers and flesh of rams. They perform a frenzied dance who also offer rice mixed with blood of rams. The Lord bears a banner of rooster whose vehicle is the elephant, Piṇimukam.

The account gathered from *TMP* on Paḻamutircōlai is important to point out the growing impact of Sanskritic ideas. The Lord is associated with the 'six mothers' and called the son of Malaimakaḷ (Daughter of the Mountain), Koṟṟavai or Paḻaiyōḷ (the Primeval one). To quote:

> 'Aṟuvar payatta āṟamar celva
> Ālkeḷu kaṭavuṭ putalvamālvarai
> Malaimakaḷ makaṉē maṟṟōr kūṟṟē
> Veṟṟivēl pōrk Koṟṟavai ciṟuva
> Iḻaiaṇi ciṟappil *paḻaiyōḷ kuḻavi*' (*TMP*. 11. 255-59), *kulavi* 'child'.

The other aspects of the Lord, summarised in the poem are as follows:

1. War General (*tāṉaittalaivaṉ*), pointing out his Devasenāpati aspect,
2. One who wears the *cannavīra* (?) (*mālai mārpa*, literally wearer of garland),
3. The learned one, well versed in sacred lore (indicates Brahmasāsta aspect ?),
4. Husband of the maids (meaning thereby Vaḷḷi and Devasena ?),
5. Who toppled the hill (Sūrapadma),
6. Lord of *kuṟiñci* tract (*kuṟiñcikk kiḻavaṉ*),
7. His names being Murukaṉ and Neṭuvēl (*TPM*, 11. 260-73).

The above account clearly points out not only the impact of northern ideas such as his birth status but also the continued persistence of the original Tamil idioms pertaining to Vaḷḷi, Cūr and *kuṟiñci*.

The *Paripāṭal* is another important text of the later Caṅkam period that presents a consolidated picture of Murukaṉ of the emerging neo-Skanda cult in Tamilnadu. Eight (nos. 5, 8, 9, 14, 17, 18, 19 and 21) out of the twenty two are on Cevvēl-Murukaṉ. Another part of the same text, called *Paripāṭal-tiraṭṭu*, consists of eleven poems but none bearing on Murukaṉ.

Poem no. V by Kaṭuvaṉ Iḷavētiyaṉār[24] presents a graphic account of the myth pertaining to *Kumārasaṁbhava*, Murukaṉ's attributes and iconographical features. The Lord is said to be the son of Śiva and Umā. They had a sexual union (*puṇarnta = kāma*) and Umā conceived. She destroyed the foetus when requested so by Indra. The mass of the still-born foetus was handed over by Umā to Indra who in turn left it with the seven great sages (Sapta-*ṛṣis*). Realising the greatness of the foetus, the *ṛṣis* offered it to their wives who (excepting the chaste one, Arundhati) consumed it. They delivered six children in a lotus pond on the Himālayas. The babies were cut to pieces by Indra again by his *vajrāyudha*. They were united into one baby. The Lord is said to have won Indra at the time of his birth. Being a heroic baby, he was offered a rooster by Agni that was made out of a part of the Fire God's fiery effulgence, Indra offered a peacock made out of his own prowess, Yama separated a part of his energy and created a ram for the Lord. Murukaṉ bears the following in hands: *maṟi* (goat), *maññai* (peacock), *vāraṇaccēval* (rooster), bow, *tōmaram* or *maram*, *vāḷ* (sword), *ilaiceṟi-iṭṭi* (spear), *kuṭāri* (axe), *maḻu (ṭaṅka)*, *mālai* (garland) and *maṇi (ghaṇṭa)*. He is decked with a garland made of *kaṭampa* flowers. The six-headed and twelve-handed one,[25] he shines red like the sun and so called Cevvēḷ. The lotus-born (cf. Brahmā's epithet Padmaja), as mounted on his vehicle, the elephant Piṇimukam, he cuts the guardian-knot of the tree-demon, Cūrma (cf. Cūr in early Caṅkam texts and also the Skt. Sūrapadma) and destroys the race of evil-mongers, the demons. The Krauñca hill, lying on the north of Nāvalantīvu (Skt. Jambudvīpa) was cut by the Lord's powerful *vēl*.

Poem no. VIII by Nallantuvaṉār describes Paraṅkuṉṟam that is said to be the abode of gods visiting Murukaṉ. They are *puḷkoṭiyōṉ* (Skt. Garuḍavaja-Viṣṇu), *Puṅkavamūrvōṉ* (Skt. Ṛṣabhavāhana-Śiva), Malarticaimutalvaṉ (Brahmā facing the cardinal directions), twelve Ādityas, two Aśvinis, eight Vasus, Ekādaśarudras, Dikpālakas, *devas*, demons and *ṛṣis*. The Lord's love-making with a girl of the hunter-tribe (*kuṟamakaḷ*) and the destruction of tree-demon are alluded to. Paraṅkuṉṟam is a place of scenic beauty, noted for its beautiful waterfalls and reservoirs. Lovers frequented the place because the Lord blessed them with a happy-married life. Lovers used to swear on Murukaṉ, the peacock, *vēl*, and Vaḷḷi to lead a virtuous life.

Poem no. IX by Kuṉṟam Pūtaṉār (Bhūtam of the Hill) presents an interesting peep into the status of Vaḷḷi and Devasena, the consorts of Murukaṉ, in the Tamil tradition of the times. It has been proved so far that Vaḷḷi was the autochthonous spouse of the Lord.

Murukaṉ was Lord of the hill country. Vaḷḷi was the daughter of a chieftain of the hill, belonging to a tribal family, called *kuṟavar* 'hunter'. As a result of the Sanskritic impact Devasena is accommodated into the Tamil system who becomes the other spouse of the Lord. Now, a quarrel arises between the two wives, which leads to violent flirtations since the maidens attending on both the girls start fighting as it happens in case of the Montagues and Capulets of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The skirmish is beautifully described and the plight of Murukaṉ, supposed to be the War General of *devas*, graphically pen-pictured to show how he was helpless before the quarrelling maidens. He even goes to the extent of prostrating before Devasena in order to appease her. Murukaṉ is called Kumāra (1. 82) in the book. The poem refers to his birth through Śiva-Umā and the six (*kṛttika*) girls. A vague reference to Vaḷḷi's birth through a *māṉ* '(she) gazelle'[26] appears. She is called *Kuṟiñcikkuṉṟavar*-Vaḷḷi 'Vaḷḷi of the mountain-dwellers (family)' i.e., *kuṟavar* 'hunters'. Devasena is called *vāṉavaṉmakaḷ* 'daughter of the celestial (king)'. Murukaṉ uprooting the hill of Cūr is noted.

Kuṉṟam or (*tiru*) Paraṅkuṉṟam is the hero of the *Paripāṭal* verses. The hill, its scenic beauty, the waterfalls, water reservoirs and ecological set up are beautifully described. Poem no. XIX compares the hill to Meru, the *Axis mundi*,[27] and one who circumambulates Paraṅkuṉṟam is supposed to come around the cosmic peak. Vaḷḷi is called Vaḷḷippū 'the *vaḷḷi*-flower' (Poem XIV) whose hand the six-headed and twelve-handed takes. It is at Paraṅkuṉṟam that the Lord was wedded to Vaḷḷi, the rituals (?) of which differed from those of the wedlock with Devasena (Poem XIX). It seems to be a vague reference to the tribal marriage customs according to which Murukaṉ is supposed to have got married to Vaḷḷi. She is also called *kuṟa-koṭi* 'creeper-like girl of *kuṟavas*', the tribals who inhabited mountainous regions. The hill was the abode of *teyvaviḻā* 'divine festival' in which devotees extol the praise of the Lord with lit torches, playing musical instruments like *yāḷ*, *kuḻal*, *tumpi* and *muḻavu*, and offer incense and cosmetics, hoisting flags and carrying *maṇivēl* 'spear studded with gems'. Poem no. XVIII makes a chariot the Lord's vehicle and compares him to the sun travelling on peacock. The Lord's ensign, the spear, is called *veñcuṭarvēl* 'glittering white spear'. He is named Mālmarukaṉ 'son-in-law of Māl (Viṣṇu)' (Poem XIX). The heroic exploits are alluded to quite often in eloquent terms. Cūrma is one who appeared like the dark clouds above the surface of sea (Poem XVIII). The Krauñca hill is said to have been named after a bird of the same name (Poem XXI) that is comparable to the Himālayas (Poem XVIII).

The Tamil epic, *Cilappatikāram*, presents a consolidated picture of the cult of Murukaṉ. The Lord is called Cilampaṉ (one who wears the anklet), Katampaṉ (one who resides? in *kaṭampa* tree), Vēlaṉ (wielder of spear) and Ālamarcelvaṉ-putalvaṉ (son of the God who sits below the *āl* tree, i.e., Śiva)[28] (see 3: 24 *Kuṉṟakkuravai* 'Song of the Mountaineer'). He is said to be the son of the six mothers whose breast-milk he consumed. He was Malaimakaḷmakaṉ (son of the daughter of the hill, i.e., Umā). Vaḷḷi is called Kuṟamakaḷ 'daughter of the *Kuṟava'*, who was the *kulamakaḷ (kuladevata ?)* of the hill-folk. It is interesting to find that the newly emerging Pattiṉitēvi 'Goddess of Chastity' (i.e., Kaṇṇaki, heroine of the Epic), is equated with Vaḷḷi. The six-headed and twelve-handed Lord is associated with the hill-demon whose chest he cleft with the *neṭuvēl* 'long spear'. He takes the epithet *kuṉṟam-koṉṟāṉ* '(one) who killed the hill'. The orgiastic dance, *vēlaṉ-veṟiyāṭṭam* is mentioned. The centres of Murukaṉ cult are noted. They are Centil (Tiruccentūr), Ceṅkōtu (Tirucceṅkōṭu), Veṇkuṉṟam (Svāmimalai) and Ērakam or Tiruērakam. Ceṅkōṭu is noted for the first time that fails to appear in earlier texts.

The *bhakti* literature of the early Nāyaṉmār contain some criptic references to Murukaṉ and his personality. The Lord is called by Appar with various names like Cēntaṉ (*Tēvaram* 4:43:8), Vēlavaṉ (4:105:5), Kaṭampaṉ (5:133:9), Kumaraṉ (5:178:10, 6:227:10, 6:238:8, 6:236:6, 6:267:2), Murukavēl (5:130:7, 6:219:10, 6:274:9), Āṟumukaṉ (6:288:7) and so on. Ñāṉacampantar gives a hint regarding the *āliṅganamūrti* form of Murukaṉ who is very close to Vaḷḷi, the touch of whose breasts the Lord enjoys, Vaḷḷi-*mulaitōy*-Kumaraṉ (2:199:60). Appar refers to *mayūravāhana* and the twelve handed child. Cūr is called Cūrapaṉmā (Sūrapadma) for the first time (5:178:10). Cuntarar notes Tirumurukaṉpūṇṭi as a centre of the Murukaṉ cult, along with Ceṅkōṭu that fall within limits of the Koṅgunāḍu in Tamil Nadu from where no centre is noted in other texts like *TMP*. The Lord is called *amarar cēṉaikku nāyakaṉ* (7:68:7), the equivalent of Devasenāpati.

The *Kallāṭam* makes further progress by incorporating new idioms. To begin with the poem on Murukaṉ is an invocatory verse. The following is a paraphrase of the poem:

1. The Lord dislodged *siṁhamukhāsura* 'lion-faced demon' who caused suffering to the world.
2. Sūrapadma was cut into two pieces by the missle given by the Lord's Mother.
3. The Lord is seated on a peacock whose plumage spreads on both sides.
4. He bisected a mango tree, both parts of which became a peacock and rooster.
5. A wild ram sprang from the sacrificial pit of Nārada whom the Lord subdued and sat upon it.
6. Devasena is called the daughter of *yāṉai* (elephant) with whom the Lord is said to have cohabited (T. *puṇarntu*). This idiom strikingly compares with Vaḷḷi who earlier is called the daughter of a she-gazelle.
7. Then comes Vaḷḷi, likened to a creeper of the hill country also called *vaḷḷi*, who embraces the Lord, again a hint to *āliṅganamūrti* form.
8. *Kumārasaṁbhava* is said to have taken place at the top of the Himālayas in a lotus pond after which the child took the divine milk of six Mothers.
9. He was a teacher of his own father who stood before him with hands folded.
10. He imprisoned the God of Creation (Brahmā) who posed Himself to be the Brahmā not knowing the meaning of *praṇava*.

11. He taught Agastya the meaning of the *Vedas*.
12. The *ṣaṭākṣara* 'six holy letters' is noted.

The other dimension of Skanda is traceable in the Sanskritic sources of iconic tradition. Scholars trace the origin of Skanda back to the Vedic times. A panoramic view of the personality of Skanda has been presented in these works *vis-à-vis* the Tamil texts.

The *Amarakoṣa* (1: 77-80), a lexicon of the Gupta period, summarises the characteristic qualities of Kumāra-Skanda in criptic epithets as follows:

> *'Kārttikeyo mahāsenaḥ śārajanmā ṣaṭānanaḥ*
> *Pārvatīnandanaḥ skandaḥ senāniḥ agnibhūrgruhaḥ*
> *Bāhuleyastārakajidviśākhaḥ śikhivāhanaḥ*
> *Ṣaṇmātṛraḥ śaktidharaḥ kumāraḥ krauñcadāraṇaḥ'.*

These epithets give the various names of the God and summarise his *guṇāṃśas*. Kārttikeya may be derived from Kṛttika, the mothers, who are supposed to have brought up the six children of Śiva. Mahāsena would mean the great war general, commander-in-chief of the armed flanks of the gods, i.e., *devasenāpati*. Śarajanma would stand for one born of reeds. Ṣaṭānana is an epithet, which points out the six-headed aspect of the Lord. Pārvatīnanda means a son of Pārvatī or one pleasing to Devī. Kārttikeya, Skanda and Kumāra are the popular names of the Lord. Senāni is the same as Mahāsena. Agnibhūrgṛhaḥ is an epithet which would point out the birth of Kumāra through the medium of *agni* 'fire', Agni, the God of Fire. *Viśākha* is the Lord's asterism, considered very auspicious for undertaking festivals in his honour. Śikhivāhana would mean Lord of the peacock vehicle. Ṣaṇmātṛraḥ is an epithet that points out the fact the Lord was nursed by six mothers. Śaktidhara would mean one who wields the weapon, *śakti* 'spear'. Krauñcadārana refers to the feat associated with the uprooting the hill, *krauñca*.

From the evidences provided by the *Amarakoṣa* (5th century A.D.) it may be understood that the personality of Skanda reached its crystallization by about the Gupta period. At its earliest phase, Skanda is treated as a miraculous baby, the wonderful hero and leader of the celestial army, in Vedic texts. Scholars (V.S. Agrawala) quote from the Vedic sources; the *Maitrāyanīsaṁhita*, *Taittirīyasaṁhita* and *Vājasneyisaṁhita* record the early traditions. Then, a penetrating picture into the epithets and episode relating to Kumārasaṁbhava are found in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Later comes the age of the Guptas of which the most striking pen-picture is to be found in the works of *mahākavi* Kālidāsa, especially the *Raghuvaṁśa* and *Kumārasaṁbhava*. Besides, the *Mṛcchakaṭika* of Sūdraka, and the *Bhagavatgīta* supply rare hints, exalting the personality of Skanda. Among the post-Gupta works are Varāhamihira's *Bṛhatsaṁhita* and the *Viṣṇudharmottara*.

The *Kumārasaṁbhava* of Kālidāsa is the source that presents a romantic account of the events leading to the birth of Kumāra and records his early war-like activities like the rendition of Sūrapadma. The *Raghuvaṁśa* calls the Lord Senāni and Śarajanma, pointing out the Lord's status as Commander of the celestial army and his birth in the Saravaṇa lake. He is called Guha. The *Mṛcchakaṭika* makes him the patron deity of robbers and thieves. In the *Bhagavat-Gīta* (10:24), the Lord, Kṛṣṇa compares himself to Skanda as leader of armed forces, *Senāninamaham Skandaḥ*. The *Bṛhatsaṁhita* says that the Lord, Skanda, is boyish, holding a spear and bearing the peacock ensign. He also rides the peacock and holds *śakti (śaktīdhara)*. According to the *Viṣṇudharmottara* the Lord is Ṣaṇmukha 'six faced' and *śikhandaka* 'locks of hair braided into three or five knots'. He wears red garments and rides a peacock. His four hands bear the *kukkuṭa, ghaṇṭa, vaijayantipatāka* and *śakti*.

The high watermark of Skanda in iconography is reahced in the *Kumāratantra* and the *Śrītattvanidhi*. The later text speaks of seventeen of the Lord's forms. They are Ñānaśakti, Skanda, Agnijāta, Saurabheya, Khaṅgeya, Saravaṇodbhava, Kārttikeya, Kumāra, Ṣaṇmukha, Tārakāri, Senāni, Guha, Brahmacāri, Deśika, Krauñcabheda, Śikhivāhana, and Vēlāyudha, all suffixed with Subrahmaṇya. It is according to an *upāgama* of the *Śaivāgama* called *Śaivāgamaśekhara.*[30]

CONSOLIDATION

In conclusion we may take stock of three important evidences supplied by archaeological sources for obtaining a better picture of the imagery of Skanda. The excavations in the Nāgarjunakoṇḍa valley have brought to light the evidences of a temple dedicated to Skanda. When the hydroelectric project was implemented, the ruins consisting of the basement, were dug to their roots and planted on the top of a hill where the temple now stands. The image of Skanda, said to have been housed in the *garbhagṛha* is now placed in the island museum. As far as our knowledge goes, it is the earliest surviving temple of Skanda. The Mathurā museum houses an image of Skanda of the Kuṣāṇa period. Both these images are of the same typology, *sthānaka* and *dvibhuja*. The Lord holds a *śakti* in one of his hands. Another important monument *in situ* is the cave temple in Udayagiri (M. P.) of the Gupta period wherein an image of the Lord is housed in the *garbhagṛha*. The temple may be placed in a century anterior to Jogeśvarī. Udayagiri is important for images of Gaṇapati, perhaps the earliest among the Indian monuments so far traceable. One has its roots in Tamil and the other Sanskrit. The reference in post-Vedic works would attest the fact that Skanda was known to Indian tradition since atleast 1000 B.C. The date of the Tamil texts, bearing on Murukaṉ, is a complicated affair. Some of the traditional scholars assign the *Tolkāppiyam* to a very early date, may be 1000 B.C. The date is not accepted by most other scholars. The recent trend is to view atleast a stratum of Caṅkam works to begin with 300 B.C. Kamil V. Zvelebil hints at the point naively but is cautious enough not to suggest any exact date. If atleast one stratum of the Caṅkam literature dates back from 300 B.C., the antiquity of Murukaṉ gets closer to the Sanskritic sources.

The place of Gaṇapati is not like that. The Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi inscription calls the Lord Deśivināyakar but the concept of an elephant-headed god is not to be found in the earlier stratum of literature, i.e., the Caṅkam. The theory proposed by scholars like M. Arunachalam is good to read but in the absence of any monumental evidence, they pale into insignificance. The case of Murukaṉ is different because even if no archaeological evidence is forthcoming, the plenty of material available in literary works stand to his credit.

The early phase of Gaṇapati cult is very simple. He is viewed as an elephant, an elephant-headed god, and Lord of Obstacles. He is said to have been born to Śiva and Umā who had an intercourse, disguised as elephants. He was considered the God of Wisdom and no heroic exploits are attributed to him, excepting *Gajamukhāsura* who is blown out by the air coming out of the elephant's nostrils.

Skanda in Tamil tradition is associated with war and romance. His two important functions are to overthrow Cūraṉ and take the hand of Vaḷḷi, daughter of a hunter-tribesman. He is also associated with tree worship and believed to have been a god residing in the *kaṭampu* tree. It seems his ethos was ferociousness and so the mass were afraid of him. Nothing relating to Murukaṉ's parentage is known in early Tamil works. In ancient Sanskrit literature the place of Skanda is something different. He was the son of Śiva and Umā, which account reaches the stage of crystallization in Kālidāsa's *Kumārasaṁbhava*. He was the commander of the armed flanks of the gods whom he directs against demons, e.g. Tāraka. He weds the daughter of Indra, called Devasena. By about the 4th century A.D. as a result of the Āryan impact on Tamil culture Murukaṉ and Skanda get merged. The *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*, which extols the glories of the six centres of the cult in Tamil Nadu appropriates the idioms relating to his birth and the personality of the god completely changes. He is endowed with six faces, twelve hands, two wives and the myths go on elaborating till a level of summation is reached in the *Kanta Purāṇam*.

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1. N. Vanamalai, Skanda-Muruga Synthesis (A Social Anthropological View), ed. R. Nagaswamy, *South Indian Studies*, Vol. II, pp. 8-30.
2. M. Arunachalam, Puṟanāṉūṟu and a rethinking on Gaṇapati Worship in Tamilnadu, ed. R. Nagaswamy, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-46.
3. *Idem.*, pp. 45-6.
4. N. Subrahmanian, *Śaṅgam Polity*, pp. 375-6.
5. For an authentic account see R.K.K. Rajarajan, Sugarcane Gaṇapati, *East and West*, Vol. 51:3-4, p. 379n. *Infra* p. 8.
6. M. Arunachalam, *loc. cit.*, p. 34.
   It is a plausible interpretation because in the *Tēvāram* (4:3:1) of Appar there is a beautiful reference to Gaṇapati called *kaḷiṟu*. To quote:

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KAL-E

Mātarp piraikkan̲n̲iyān̲ai malaiyān̲ makaḷōṭum pāṭip
Pōtoṭu nīrcumantēttip pukuvāravarpin̲ pukuvēn̲
Yātuñcuvaṭu paṭāmal Aiyāṟaṭaikin̲ṟapōtu
Kātan̲maṭappiṭi yōṭuṅ kaḷiṟu varuvan̲a kaṇṭēn̲ ...

In the cited verse Malaiyān̲makaḷ 'daughter of the hill (i.e., Devī)' and Śiva are supposed to move in the form of male and female elephants (*piṭi* and *kaḷiṟu*). Though *kaḷiṟu* here refers to Śiva, with due reference to the verse cited earlier (*Tēvāram* 1:123:5) it may be stated that Śiva and Umā roam about in the form of elephants with a view to produce another *kaḷiṟu*. i.e., Gaṇapati.

7. The verse runs as follows:

Eṇṇum poruḷin̲itē yellā muṭittemakku
Naṇṇuṅ kālaiyan̲aittu nalkumāl kaṇṇutalin̲
Muṇṭattān-aṇṭattān̲ mūlattān̲ālañcēr
kaṇṭattānīn̲ṟa kaḷiṟu

'The root of all, the three eyed one whose body is the Cosmos and who consumed the deadly poison, the blue-throated one, gave birth to the *kaḷiṟu* 'elephant', the (latter) gives us all we desire and fulfills our aspirations and he gives us *kalai* (wisdom)'.
vide, *Aintiṇaieḻupatu* ed., A. Nataraja Pillai, Madras 1970.

8. M. Arunachalam, *loc. cit.*, pp. 33-5.
9. T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 35-47.
10. These two epithets form part of *Gaṇapatiaṣṭtottaram*.
11. For a detailed account see n. 5 *supra*.
12. Heinrich Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, pp. 70, 183.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 184. Cf. R.K.K. Rajarajan, Sugarcane Ganapati, *East and West*, Vol. 51 : 3-4, 2001, pp. 379-84.
14. *Tolkāppiyam*, an ancient Tamil grammar, speaks about the types of land and the gods exclusive of the different types. The concerned verse runs as follows:

Māyōn̲ mēya kāṭurai ulakamum
Cēyōn̲ mēya maivarai ulakamum
Vēntan̲ mēya tīmpuṇal ulakamum
Varuṇan̲ mēya perumaṇal uḻakamum

According to this version, Māyōn̲ (Viṣṇu), Cēyōn̲ (Murukan̲), Vēntan̲ (Indra) and Varuṇan̲ (Varuṇa) are presiding gods of the *marutam* (fields), *kuṟiñci* (hills), *mullai* (forest) and *neytal* (littorals) tracts. Koṟṟavai is Goddess of the desert tract. Śiva and Brahmā find no place but are supposed to be gods of all types of land, i.e., common to all.

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15. Tamil lexicons of the later medieval period like *Piṅkalam* (10th century A.D.) and *Tivākaram* (10th century A.D.) give a list of the names of Murukan̲. The names are: Kumaran̲, Teyvakuñcarimaṇālan̲, Cilampan̲, Murukan̲, Cēy, Kaṭampan̲, Cāmi (Svāmi), Kārttikēyan̲, Cēntan̲, Kuṟiñcikkiḻavan̲, Ceṭṭi, Kāṅkēyan̲, Gaurimaintan̲, Kantan̲, Vēlan̲, Vaḷḷikēḻvan̲, Vicākān̲, Tārakāri, Kukan̲, Āṟiru-karattōn̲, Aritirumarukan̲, Kuḷakan̲, Kaṅkaimaintan̲, Kun̲ṟerintōn̲, Aṟuminkātalan̲, Acuraṟṟaṭintōn̲, Cevalaṅkoṭiyōn̲, Devasenāpati, Pāvaci, Ācān̲, Kalaiyaṟipulavan̲, Aran̲makan̲ and Yān̲aikukaṟkkiḷaiyōn̲ (*Piṅkalam* v. 1:18).

16. The *Tirumurukāṟuppaṭai* (3rd century A.D.) is the earliest literature to sing the glory of the six famous centres of Murukaṉ cult. The names of the places as mentioned in the text are Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, Tiruccīralaivāy (Tiruccentūr), Tiruvāvinaṉkuṭi (Paḻaṉi), Tiruērakam (Svāmimalai), Kuṉṟutorāṭal (Tiruttaṇi) and Paḻamutircōlai (Aḻakarmalai, near Maturai).
17. For a detailed list see *Census Reports of India* (1961) *Temples of Tamilnadu*. The present list is from Raju Kalidos, *Temple Cars of Medieval Tamiḻaham*, pp. 261-73.
18. Kamil V. Zvelebil, *Tiru Murukaṉ*, p. 77.
19. See n. 30 *infra*.
20. C.E. Ramachandran, *Ahanānūṟu in its Historical Setting*, pp. 62-3.
21. N. Vanamamalai, *op. cit.*, p. 11. For a consolidated account of Skanda-Murukan see n. 30.
22. Kamil V. Zvelebil, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-25.
23. The *Cilappatikāram* (2, *Vaḻakkuraikātai* 11. 39-40) (see Vol. III, p. 16) mentions Devī's valour of tearing to pieces the potency of Tārukaṉ. Likewise, Devī's attribute of slaughtering Mahiṣāsura is earlier associated with Skanda in the *Mahābhārata*. See Thomas B. Coburn, *Devī Mahātmyam: the Crystallisation of Goddess Tradition*, New Delhi 1984, p. 226; Also Raju Kalidos, "Iconography of Mahiṣāsuramardinī; A Probe into Stylistic Evolution", *Acta Orientalia*, Vol. L, 1989, p. 14. The *Tēvāram* (4.14.4) assigns the feat to Śiva: *Tārakaṉṟa nuṭalam piḻantu*.
24. The name, Ilavētiyaṉār (=Balavediṣ, Vedi is an expert in *Vedas*), is of significance to ear-mark the expertise of Sanskritists, proficient in Tamil.
25. Later, Aruṇakiri in his *Tiruppukaḻ* reiterates the same idea as follows:

Ēṟumayilēri viḷaiyāṭu mukamoṉṟē
Īcaruṭaṉ ñāṉamoḻi pēcumuka moṉṟē
Kūṟumaṭiyārkaḷ viṉai tīrtta mukamoṉṟē
Kuṉṟuruva vēlvāṅki niṉṟa mukamoṉṟē
Māṟupaṭucūrarai vataitta muka moṉṟē
Vaḷḷiyai maṇam puṇaravanta mukamoṉṟē
Āṟumukamāṉa poruḷ niyaruḷal vēṇṭum
Ātiyaruṇācala mamarnta perumāḷē.

'One is the face which dallys as seated on peacock,
Another converses words of wisdom with Īśvara
One eradicates the hardships suffered by devotees
Another uproots the hill with the help of spear
One slaughters the opposing Cūra in battle
Another came prepared to take the hand of Vaḷḷi
O! Lord tell me the meaning of the six faced form
Thou! residing at old Aruṇācala hill!

See Zvelebil (1981: 71).

26. The *Kanta Purāṇam* (T.) deals at length with the story relating to the birth of Vaḷḷi. She is said to be the adopted daughter of the mountain-chieftain, Nampi, who discovered a baby, nursed by a (she) - gazelle. She is supposed to have been born to a *ṛṣi* through the antelope by a mental (sexual) intercourse. Perhaps the roots of this myth are found in the *Paripāṭal* under study. For a detailed examination of the myth and its application in later medieval art of Tamilnadu see

Raju Kalidos, "Tantric Buddhist Interaction with the Development of Iconography in Tamilnadu", *Tamil Civilization*, Vol. IV: 1-2, 1986, pp. 77-85.

27. Cf. Patrick Harrigan. *Katargama, The Mystery Shrine*, Chennai 1998.
28. The same epithet appears in earlier texts like *Kalittokai* (81, 83), *TMP* (1. 256) and the later day *Maṇimēkalai* (3.144), the other important Tamil epic.
29. Later texts (e.g., *Kumāratantra*) call the Lord Aruṇārūḍamūrti who is mounted a ram.
30. For details see Raju Kalidos, Iconography of Skanda-Murukan: Flashes of Insight, *Journal of the Institute of Asian Studies*, XVI: 2, 1999, pp. 73-90.

CHAPTER II

Iconographical Survey: Upper Deccan

Images of Gaṇapati and Skanda are mostly concentrated in the caves of Ellora. The distribution pattern in other centres like Elephanta is sporadic and numerically lesser. The important centres are Elephanta, Maṇḍapeśvara, Jogeśvarī, Ellora, Auraṅgābād, Bhokardān, Māhūr and Takli Ḍhokeśvara.The major carvings, giving an independent status for Gaṇapati are to be found mostly in the Ellora, Jogeśvari and Auraṅgābād caves. In other places, Gaṇapati mostly gets the status of a *parivāradevata* and not projected prominently. That is to say, he may form part and parcel of the Mātṛkas or appear at different locations of the architectural order of the caves, e.g., on pillars and so on. Skanda mostly is dependent and not independent.

ELEPHANTA

The main Elephanta cave as such provides no space for any major representation of Gaṇapati or Skanda. The subsidiary cave on the right side of the main in its left additional *maṇḍapa* provides the venue for Aṣṭa Mātṛkas. Gaṇapati appears on the left (Pl. X), next to Cāmuṇḍā as usual. The life size image (about 5′ in height) is of the *āsana* type. The knee of the right leg is erect while the left placed horizontally on the seat. The proboscis is turned to the left. The Lord is *caturbhuja*. The hands are broken and so it is difficult to identify the emblems. Two of the front hands seem to have had *daṇḍa* and *modaka*. Attendants, bearing garlands, appear just above Gaṇapati's head. These represent *vidyādharas* and *apsarase*. Two more assistants stand close to the seated Lord. One holds a pot, and the other one on the left side, slightly leans over the Lord's thigh.

Within the precincts of the *maṇḍapa*, where the Mātṛkas are housed, an image of Skanda appears on its north end. A pretty big panel (measuring 10 x 10′), the image represents the Lord in *sthānaka* attitude. He is *dvibhuja* and has the left in *ūruhasta* attitude with the right holding a *śakti*. The weapon, typical of Skanda, is represented in its personified aspect in female form.[1] The Lord wears a *karaṇḍamakuṭa, makarakuṇḍalas* and a *mālā*. The personified *śakti* is *dvibhuja* and holds a flower in one of the hands. She is dwarfish and measures upto the Lord's hip level.[2] An interesting feature of the image is that Brahmā and Viṣṇu attend on Skanda. It is an idiom that most illustrations of the main cave at Elephanta like Kalyānasundaramūrti, Ardhanārīśvara and others include. Brahmā seated on a *padmapīṭha* and Viṣṇu on *Garuḍa* give clue to the fact that the image of Skanda is as important as his Śaiva counterparts in the main cave. Attendants like *vidyādhara* appear at top of the relief.

The main Elephanta cave is full of the presence of Śiva. All major carvings relate to the important manifestations of Śiva wherein gods and goddesses of the other important Hindu sects like Vaiṣṇavism, Śāktam, Gāṇapatya and Brahmā appear as secondary or tertiary elements. For example, Brahmā and Viṣṇu appear on their respective vehicles as already noted in case of the Skanda image in the right auxiliary cave. No image of Skanda appears anywhere. Gaṇapati is found as a member of few of the major carvings of Śiva. A speciality is that miniatures of Gaṇapati (about 9" in height) appear on the four corners of the pillars at the top of their square end (*mālasthāna*). Usually pillars in later Cōḻa temples at such a location consist of *nāgabandhas*.[3] Gaṇapati appearing at a place of the *nāgabandha* is indeed an interesting prototype.[4] There are sixteen major *stambhas* 'pillars' and most of them consist of the motif. In all these representations Gaṇapati is uniformly seated. He holds the *daṇḍa* and *modaka* in *pūrvahastas*. The proboscis is turned to the left, called *iṭampuri* in Tamil tradition. It is to be noted that most of the Gaṇapati images in the Deccan are of this pattern where as in Tamil Nadu the *valampuri* '(proboscis) turned to the right' predominates.

Of the nine major illustrations of Śiva, which include Yogīśvara, Naṭarāja, Gajasaṁhāramūrti, Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti, Kalyāṇasundaramūrti, 'Dice Game', Gaṅgādharamūrti, Trimūrti and Ardhanārīśvara, two are important for including miniatures of Gaṇapati. The Naṭarāja panel includes Gaṇapati on its left side. Gaṇapati is found standing (about 3' in height), rather flying. He is *dvibhuja*. The left hand carries a jar which is filled with eatables (*modaka*). The proboscis is turned to the right, which makes it a rare specimen of the *valampuri* type. The Lord appears without any headgear and the window-like ears fan on either side of the face. The uniqueness of the image is in its stance. Of the very few specimens of not-seated Gaṇapati images in the entire Deccan, it is one though a miniature.

The Naṭarāja relief includes an additional member who is Skanda. He is of the life size and measures 5' in height. He is *dvibhuja* and holds the *śakti* in right hand. Both Gaṇapati and Skanda appear to be present on the occasion of Śiva's unearthly dance as spectators. In one of the verses of the Nāyaṉmār the point is beautifully described. Tirunāvukkaracar says that the Dancer sings and dances amidst a galaxy of the gods that includes the King of Gods (Indra), Kumāra, Vighna-Vināyaka, Brahmā as seated upon a *padmapīṭha* and Trivikrama (*Tēvāram* 6:227:10).

The Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti panel includes a number of attendant gods, Gaṇapati being one among them. He is to the left of Śiva and stands. He has two hands and carries the *modaka* in left.

JOGEŚVARĪ AND MAṆḌAPESVARA

The Jogeśvarī cave is macrocosmic architecturally and is a repository of miniatures though there was provision for a number of gigantic pieces, most of which remain in ruins at present. The *maṇḍapa*-like structure at the eastern extremity of the cave provides for cellae, meant for Gaṇapati (north) and the Mātṛkas (south). The image of Gaṇapati is life-size but in ruins. A recently added red ochre makes visible the existing *lakṣaṇas* of the image. According to the impression, Gaṇapati is *caturbhuja* and holds the *modaka* in one hand and the other is in *abhayamudrā*. The proboscis is turned toward the left and so *iṭampuri*. The Lord is seated in a posture wherein the palms of the feet meet. The *lakṣaṇa* of the image is in conformity with the most other representations of the region. Otherwise, there are two important points, which make it unique both chronologically and the location of placement within the architectural framework of the cave temple.

According to Walter Spink, Jogeśvarī chronologically belongs to the phase, which divides the later Cāḷukya from early Vākāṭaka. That means, it has to be placed at a point next to Udayagiri as far as the Hindu caves are concerned. Gaṇapati after the Gupta work at Udayagiri (Pl. IX) appears for the first time in the Upper Deccan at Jogeśvarī. Logically, it should have set the model for the numerous carvings of Gaṇapati in the Ellora caves. Next, the image appears within a *garbhagṛha*-like part of the Cave. In this respect, it has to be placed on the same level with the Gaṇeśa-*leṇa* group of Gaṇapati cave temple in Ellora. These are the few examples of Gaṇapati appearing in the core cella that adds another dimension to the elephantine God from the cult point of view. By about the 5th-6th centuries A.D. the cult of Gaṇapati may be said to have reached a definitive stage.

Besides the above major representation of Gaṇapati, two more miniatures appear in the Jogeśvarī cave. One forms part of the Kailāsanātha scene depicted just above the doorjam of the eastern entrance to the main cave temple. Here too Gaṇapati is seated with the palms of legs joined. Another figure seems to have formed part of the Sapta Mātṛkas. But it is effaced and the features could not be properly deciphered.

The Maṇḍapeśvara cave, which is close to Jogeśvarī, includes a miniature of Gaṇapati along with dwarf *gaṇas* within the format of Śiva-*tāṇḍava*. The figure is much defaced and seems to represent similar other miniatures found in Elephanta, Ellora and Badāmī. The *mālasthāna* section of pillars in the cave also consist of miniature Gaṇapati motifs as in the Elephanta main cave.

Images of Skanda are not to be found in any prominent way in any of the important sections of both the Jogeśvarī and Maṇḍapeśvara caves. The Kailāsanātha scene in the Jogeśvarī cave is supposed to include Kārttikeya in addition to Gaṇapati, already noted (*supra*).[5] Since Gaṇapati is found on one side of the major illustration, the presence of Kārttikeya could not be ruled out. But the impression is defaced. It will place the representation on a par with a similar carving in the Śiva-*tāṇḍava* relief of the main Elephanta cave.

The cluster of Hindu caves in Greater Bombay[6] which includes Jogeśvarī, Maṇḍapeśvara and Elephanta show some common trends with regard to the alignment of Gaṇapati and Skanda imagery. That is to say in none of the main excavation, they are placed prominently. Only in the Elephanta auxiliary cave, Gaṇapati and Skanda get some kind of recognition as placed in one its secondary cella-like structure. In this respect, the placement gets closer to the Cāḷukyan phase of work in Cave XXI at Ellora or Cave I in Badāmī. That is to say the part of the cave belongs to a later date when compared with the main Elephanta cave, Jogeśvaṛī and Maṇḍapeśvara. The facets of cults pertaining to Gaṇapati and Skanda seem to have been at a rudimentary stage. Perhaps, the Jogeśvarī school first took the idea of Gaṇapati from Udayagiri and provided the basis for further developments in other parts of the Upper Deccan. In this respect, Jogeśvarī occupies an important place in the cult history of Gāṇāpatyam. The cult of Skanda was still not a factor to reckon with in the Upper Deccan.

ELLORA (Pl. VI.2, Pl. XIII.1)

In the Upper Deccan the major centre of Gaṇapati imagery is the Ellora caves. Skanda appears in fewer numbers but iconographically new trends are set. The placement of Gaṇapati and Skanda images is another important factor which adds a new dimension from the cult point of view. Atleast in one cave, Gaṇapati is found in the *garbhagṛha*.

Rāvaṇa-ka-khai (Cave XIV):

The major carving of Gaṇapati is associated with the Sapta Mātṛkas. At the left extremity of the Mātṛkas, Gaṇapati appears. It is a life size image (about 5' height). The Lord is seated in *sukhāsana* attitude with the right leg pendant from the pedestal. The elephantine face is prominently carved and fitted with a *karaṇḍamakuṭa*. The proboscis is turned to the left and so *iṭampuri*. The Lord is *caturbhuja*. He holds the *modaka* (right) and *paraśu* (left) in *parahastas*. The *pūrvahastas* hold the *pāśa* (right) and *modaka* (left). The Lord's fifth hand[7] touches the eatables.

Of the major Śaiva illustrations in the cave, two include miniatures of Gaṇapati. They are 'Dice Game' and Gajasaṁhāramūrti. In the 'Dice Game' relief, Gaṇapati appears behind the figure of Śiva. The image is 3' in height. Gaṇapati is in *sthānaka* attitude. He is *caturbhuja* and holds a *paraśu* in one of the back hands. The *pūrvahastas* hold the *danta*[8] and *modaka.*[9] The proboscis is turned to the left and touches the *modaka*. In the Gajasaṁhāramūrti relief, Gaṇapati appears in between the legs of Śiva. The image is about 3' in height and *sthānaka*. The Lord is endowed with four hands of which the back ones hold *ghaṇṭa* (right)[10] and *paraśu* (left). The *pūrvahastas* are in *uruhasta* (right) and holding *modaka* (left). The image is *iṭampuri* with the proboscis touching the eatables.

Daśāvatāra (Cave XV):

The small cella on the right side of *Daśāvatāra*, lying in close proximity to the frontal *maṇḍapa* of the cave, houses an image of Gaṇapati on the left wall section of the pavilion. The image measures about three and a half feet in height. The Lord is *caturbhuja*. The features are effaced. The back left hand holding a *paraśu* is visible. The typology is seated and *iṭampuri*.

The staircase, leading to the upper floor of *Daśāvatāra*, in its list of miniature sculptures includes two of Gaṇapati, both of them seated in *padmāsana*. Both measures about two feet in height. The first image in its hands bears the *akṣamālā* (right) and *paraśu* (left) in back (Pl. XII.2). The *pūrvahastas* carry the *danta* and *modaka*. The Lord wears a *nāga-yajñopavīta*. The second image is of the same type but for some minor changes. The left hands hold the same emblems while the right back hand is just lifted above and the front rested on knee. The ornaments are the same.

The *ardhamaṇḍapa* of the main cave in the first floor in its left side wall houses an image of Skanda and the right a colossal image of Gaṇapati. Spoken with reference to the volume of work, it is one of the ambitious image of Gaṇapati in the entire Deccan of which we have very few examples. The image measures about ten feet in height. The Lord is seated with the left leg placed horizontally on the pedestal and the knee of the right held in *ūrdhva* aspect. The Lord has a big belly, huge ears and a massive elephantine head. The hands are four with the fifth hand, i.e., the proboscis, turned to the left. The *pūrvahastas* hold the *danta* and *modaka*. The objects in back hands are not legible. The legs are fitted with anklets that resemble the bell-like *pādacarams*.[11]

The image of Skanda is *sthānaka* and measures about seven feet in height. The stance is *abhaṅga*. The Lord is endowed with four hands. The front two hold a fruit and cock emblem. The back hands hold a *triśūla* and flower. Skanda's vehicle, the *mayūra* 'peacock', appears behind. Of the few images of Skanda available in the Deccan, the present one is of importance because the Lord is endowed with four hands.

Spoken with reference to the volume of work, both the images of Skanda and Gaṇapati are exceptions within the range of early medieval art on the subject. The *Daśāvatāra* cave is unique in another respect because it is here that Gaṇapati and Skanda appear facing each other within the core part of the cave in its *antarāla*-like section or what might be termed the *ardhamaṇḍapa*.

Kailāsa (Cave XVI):

The *dvāra* of the *gopura* section in its right side provides for an image of Gaṇapati. Juxtaposed to Gaṇapati is an image of Mahiṣāsuramardinī, a kind of alignment that is mostly found in the Ellora caves. Another good example is Cave XVII. The type of representation takes its origin in Udayagiri and is distributed over the entire south. An important aspect of the location of Gaṇapati is his placement at a strategic spot as a guardian deity of the temple's *dvāra* 'gateway'. Another unique feature is that the image appears within a *kūṭaśāla* niche or what might be called *devakoṣṭha*. It is to affirm that the

Lord is housed in a *garbhagṛha*-like house. The Lord is seated in *lalitāsana* attitude.[12] He is *caturbhuja* and holds the *paraśu* and flower in two of them. The proboscis is turned to the left and broken.

The *koṣṭha* that adorn the wall of the main monolithic *garbhagṛha* on the left side provides the space for an image of Gaṇapati. The image is about five feet in height. The Lord is *caturbhuja*, holding the *paraśu*, flower and eatables. He wears a big necklace, *sarpa-yajñopavita* and *sarpa-udarabandha*.

Another life size image of Gaṇapati appears in the Laṅkeśvara in its back wall on the right side of the cave. The Lord is seated in *lalitāsana*. He is *caturbhuja*, holding the *modaka* (left) and *danta* (right) in *pūrvahastas*. The *parahastas* exhibit different *mudrās*. The proboscis is turned to the left.

The back wall of the Laṅkeśvara, next to the Trimūrtis panel, houses an image of Devī in *samapāda-sthānaka* attitude. She is *caturbhuja* and holds rare emblems in *parahastas*. The left one bears a lotus with a miniature of Gaṇapati fitted atop the motif.[13] Could it be a representation of a lotus in its personified aspect? Maybe it has something to do with the origin of the elephantine God who is supposed to originate from a lotus. The bud of lotus looks like a lump and it is from a lump of the bodily impurities of Devī that Gaṇapati is said to have originated.[14] The motif may symbolically suggest the *saṁbhava* of Gaṇapati.

The Sapta Mātṛkas enclave on its back left corner houses an image of Gaṇapati as guardian of the Mothers. The Lord is seated next to Cāmuṇḍā in the usual pattern. He is *caturbhuja*, holding a pestle, broken *danta* and *modaka*. He is seated in *lalitāsana* upon a *padmapīṭha*. He wears a *naga-yajñopavīta*.

Among the miniature carvings of Gaṇapati present in the Kailāsa, one forms part of Rāvaṇānugrahamūrṭi, found at the plinth section of the monolith at the base of its right staircase, close to the Yogīśvara relief. Gaṇapati in the illustration is about one feet and found on the right side of Śiva. The image is *caturbhuja* and *iṭampuri*.

A notable specimen present in the Kailāsa is Somāskandamūrti, located on the left wall section of the *antarāḷa* in front of the main *garbhagṛha*, dedicated to Liṅga-Mahādeva. The entire composition is placed within a *kūṭaśāla*-like *koṣṭha*. The figure consists of Śiva and Umā, seated on a couchant Nandi in zoomorphic form. Skanda, the baby, stands on the thigh of Śiva. In the Pallava originals the baby is usually on the lap of Umā or found in between the Father and Mother. Skanda seated on Śiva's lap is typical of Ellora. It is the only one of its type because even in the Cōḻa and later medieval bronzes of Tamil Nadu the baby, Skanda, is linked with Devī and not Śiva. That means, he is oriented with the Father.

Cave XVII:

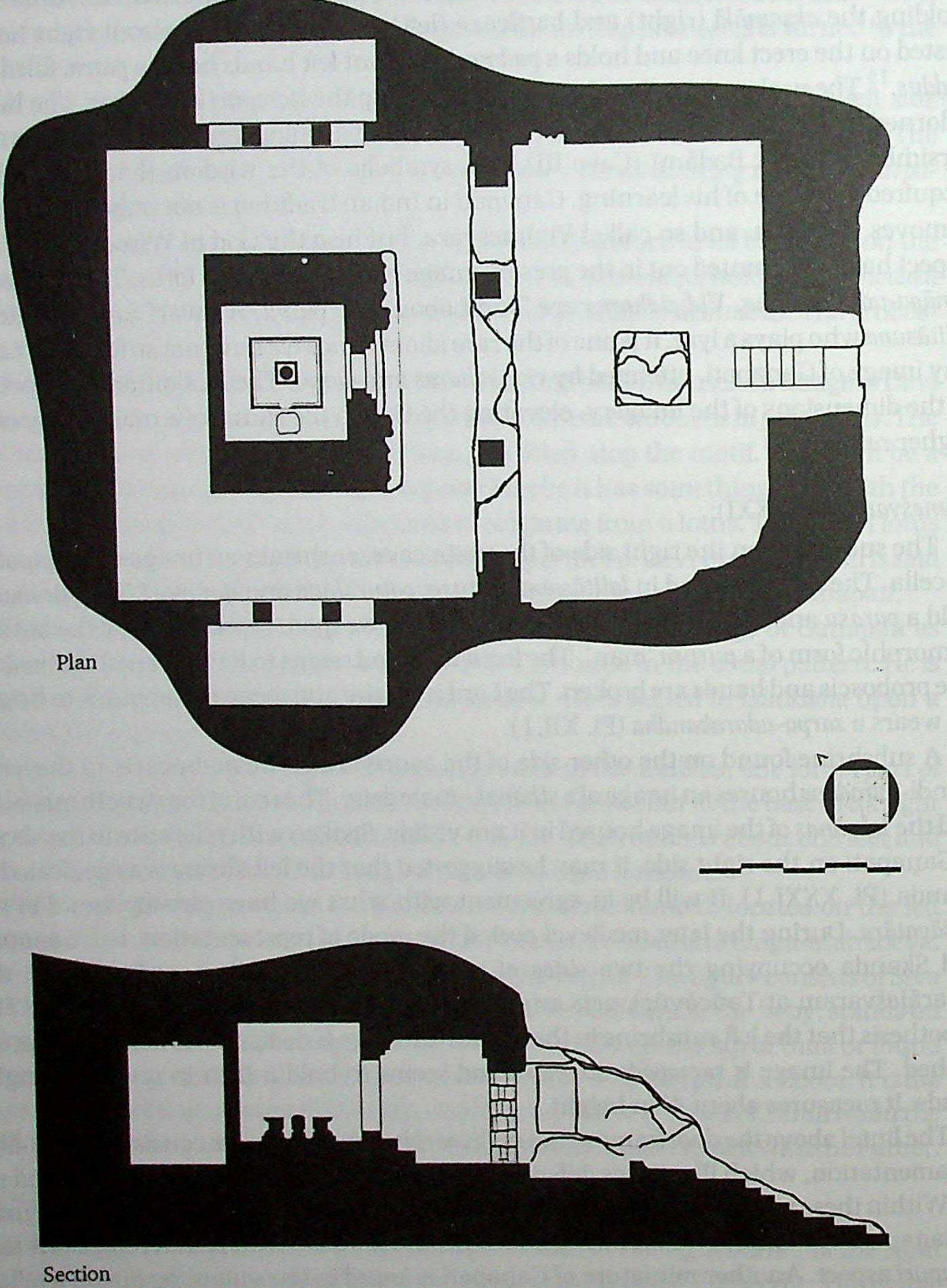
The main part of the cave in its *mahāmaṇḍapa* section at the right corner of the right side wall houses a massive image of Gaṇapati, measuring about 7' in height. The image finds the Lord in *āsana* attitude. The posture is *lalitāsana*. The corpulent belly, broad forehead and winnow-like ears are characteristic of the elephantine God. He is *caturbhuja*, holding the *akṣamālā* (right) and battleaxe (left) in *parahastas*. The front right hand is rested on the erect knee and holds a *padma*. The front left hands holds a *pātra*, filled with *laḍḍus*.[15] The proboscis is placed on *laḍḍus*, showing the *iṭampuri* character. The head is adorned with a fully blossomed lotus, a typical Cāḷukyan idiom that we come across in the Nṛsiṁha panel at Badāmī (Cave III). It is symbolic of the wisdom that the Lord has acquired by virtue of his learning. Gaṇapati in Indian tradition is not only the Lord who removes obstacles, and so called Vighneśvara, but also the God of Wisdom. The latter aspect has been pointed out in the present image by the blossomed lotus. The Lord wears a *nāga-udarabandha. Vidyādharas* are found above the panel. A dwarf *gaṇa* is seated in *lalitāsana* who plays a lyre. It is one of the rare idioms since we have not so far come across any image of Gaṇapati, attended by *vidyādharas* and *gaṇas*. These additional factors add to the dimensions of the imagery, elevating the God to the status of a major deity of the higher religion.

Rāmeśvara (Cave XXI):

The subshrine on the right side of the main cave, enshrines an image of Gaṇapati in its cella. The Lord is seated in *lalitāsana* posture, *caturbhuja* and *iṭampuri*. The *parahastas* hold a *paraśu* and the personified aspect of another weapon, represented by the anthropomorphic form of a *puruṣa* 'man'. The front left hand seems to have carried the *modaka*. The proboscis and hands are broken. The Lord is life size and measures about 5' in height. He wears a *sarpa-udarabandha* (Pl. XII.1).

A subshrine found on the other side of the courtyard of the main cave, to the left of Nandi-*maṇḍapa* houses an image of a *sthānaka* male deity. The roof of the structure is fallen and the *lakṣaṇas* of the image housed in it not visible. Spoken with reference to the shrine of Gaṇapati on the right side, it may be suggested that the left shrine was dedicated to Skanda (Pl. XXXI.1). It will be in agreement with what we have already found in the *Daśāvatāra*. During the later medieval period the mode of representation, i.e., Gaṇapati and Skanda occupying the two sides of a major temple for Śiva or Devī (e.g., the Rājarājeśvaram at Tañcāvūr), gets established and becomes a stereotyped norm. The hypothesis that the left subshrine in the Rāmeśvara cave is dedicated to Skanda is not far fetched. The image is *samapāda-sthānaka* and seems to hold a *śakti* in one of the right hands. It measures about 4' in height.

The lintel above the doorframe in the main *garbhagṛha* of the cave consists of *kūḍu*-like ornamentation, which illustrates different *vimāna* types such as *draviḍa, kūṭaśāla* and so on. Within these *vimāna* forms deities of different gods are carved. One of them has a figure of Gaṇapati. A miniature, measuring about 6", the Lord is *dvibhuja* and represents the *iṭampuri* aspect. Another miniature of Gaṇapati is found in the square section of a pillar that falls in front of the *garbhagṛha* to its left. It measures about 9" and represents the


Plan
Section

1. Plan, Cave XXI Ellora.

iṭampuri aspect, seated in *lalitāsana*. The hands are four, holding the *paraśu*, *pāśa* and *modaka*.

The two auxilary cella-like pavilions added to the *mahāmaṇḍapa* of the cave at its side extremities house images of Gaṇapati and Skanda. The left cella in its back wall provides for the Sapta Mātṛkas, flanked by Vīrabhadra (right) and Gaṇapati (left). Gaṇapati's image is life size and measures about 5'. The Lord is seated in *lalitāsana*, *iṭampuri* and *caturbhuja*. The hands hold the *akṣamālā*, *paraśu*, *modaka* and one hand is broken. The Lord wears a short *makuṭa* and *sarpa-yajñopavīta*.

The right auxiliary pavilion in its right side wall houses an image of Skanda who is juxtaposed with Mahiṣāsuramardinī, appearing on the left side wall. The image is a colossus and measures about 8' in height. Skanda stands in *samapāda-sthānaka* attitude with the *mayūra* standing behind him. The Lord is *caturbhuja* and holds eatables in the front left, holding the right hand in *ūruhasta* attitude. The ornaments include a *kirīṭamakuṭa*, *patra* (left ear) and *makara* (right ear) *kuṇḍalas*, a big necklace and *uttarīya*. Attendants include *vidyādharas* and *apsarase*, appearing above the panel. The goat-headed, Dakṣa, stands nearby who is *dvibhuja*. He has the hands fastened to the body to point out his obedience to the Lord. Another goat-headed being, perhaps the personification of the Lord's ram vehicle, stands to the left side. He is also *dvibhuja*, holding a *padma* in the right hand with the left in *ūruhasta* attitude. The motif may relate to the adventures of Skanda in his Aruṇārūdha aspect. The peacock stands on the left side of Skanda in a very gracious posture. The Lord has the front left hand placed on the bird's neck. Pointing out the significance of the carvings in the right subshrine, K.V. Soundararajan rightly adds that the presence of Skanda and the events portrayed on the back wall of the pavilion, relating to Kalyāṇasundaramūrti aspect, all illustrate events of Kālidāsa's *Kumārasaṁbhava*.[16]

Among the purāṇic illustrations of the cave, Kalyāṇasundaramūrti is a unique panel in several respects. A miniature of Gaṇapati (about 2' in height) appears in between the united hands of Śiva and Umā. He is *sthānaka* and *dvibhuja*. The representation is of importance because the Lord Gaṇapati is present even before the Cosmic Father is wedded to the Cosmic Mother. Some of the pillars upon the top corners of their square sections consist of miniatures of Gaṇapati as in the Elephanta cave.

The Gaṇapati images, both miniature and life size, are of great importance as fitted in different locations of the cave atleast show the cult value attached to the elephantine God who appears within cellae. The iconographical perspectives of Skanda set new norms and is the only one of its kind in the Deccan, coming next to Elephanta.

The annexure to Cave XXI (number XXI B) houses an image of Gaṇapati at its *façade* level. Juxtaposed to Gaṇapati is Mahiṣāsuramardinī. Gaṇapati's image is damaged. He is represented in *caturbhuja* and *iṭampuri* aspect. One of the hands holds *laḍḍus* in a *pātra*. Another hand holds a new element that looks like a bunch of paddy crop.

Nīlakaṇṭha (Cave XXII)

The *ardhamaṇḍapa* of the cave is analogous to the *Daśāvatāra*. The right side wall houses a representation of Gaṇapati and the left that of Skanda.

A life size image, measuring 5' in height, it represents Gaṇapati seated in *lalitāsana* attitude. The face is majestically tilted up in a partial *ūrdhvamukha* aspect. The Lord is *caturbhuja*, holding *akṣamālā, paraśu* and *laḍḍus*. The front right hand is broken. The proboscis is broken but with due credence to *laḍḍus* found in the front left hand, it may be supposed to be of *iṭampuri* type. The Lord wears a number of ornaments, including a big necklace, *uttarīya, nāga-yajñopavīta, nāga-keyūras* and *kiṅkiṇies* 'belled anklets'. The figure is robust, the facial expression and the corpulent belly making it vibrant and majestic.

Skanda found on the left side wall of the *ardhamaṇḍapa* is of the *samapāda-sthānaka* type. The image measures about 5'. The hands are four of which the back right holds a *śakti* (?) and the right *padma*. The *pūrvahastas* hold eatables. The ornaments include a *karaṇḍa-makuṭa, makara-kuṇḍalas*, a big necklace, *uttarīya, udarabandha* and *keyūras*.

The Sapta Mātṛkas enclave found at the right side of the entrance to the cave includes Gaṇapati among the Mothers. The Lord is seated in *lalitāsana*. The image measures about three and a half feet in height. The Lord is *caturbhuja*, holding a *paraśu* and *modaka* in left hands. The front right hand is rested on thigh. The Lord wears an *uttariya*.

Cave XXIV

It consists of a cluster of small caves, found just above the hill to the right side of Cave XXIII. There are four layers of caves, one moving above the other. Of them the top most layer consists of not less than two caves, found close to one another. The second cave in its *maṇḍapa* section on the right back wall houses an image of Gaṇapati. It measures about 4' in height. The typology is *iṭampuri* and seated in *lalitāsana*. The hands are four and hold a flower, *paraśu, danta* and *laḍḍus*. The Lord wears a *sarpa-yajñopavīta* and *kiṅkiṇies*. The first layer, located about 8' above the level of Cave XXIII, consists of five small caves of which the second in its *maṇḍapa* section on the right side wall houses an image of Gaṇapati. The left side wall is occupied by Sarasvatī. In the previous case also, i.e., the top most layer of caves, Gaṇapati is juxtaposed by Sarasvatī. The typology is analogous to what we have found in Caves XVI, XVII and XXIB where in Gaṇapati is placed in an axial alignment with Mahiṣāsuramardinī. In these small caves, Sarasvatī replaces Mahiṣāsuramardinī and may possibly represent a later tradition.

The other main caves in Ellora (nos. XXV to XXIX) do not have any representation of Gaṇapati or Skanda. It is indeed surprising to note that even the *Ḍumārleṇa* (no. XXIX) that in its organisation is a replica the Elephanta main cave and the Jogeśvarī cave fails to accord any place for Gaṇapati or Skanda even as a member of major carvings like Naṭarāja, Gajasaṁhāramūrti and Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti.

Gaṇeśa-Leṇa Group

The Gaṇeśa cave found just above the *Ḍumārleṇa* at a high altitude on the right bank of the Elgaṅgā river is very important for its organisation. It consists of a central niche on the back wall of the cave which provides the venue for Gaṇapati (Pl. XIII.2). It obviously is in the form of a *garbhagṛha* though actually there is no cave-like cella. On the two sides two more *garbhagṛhas* in both cases are found. Totally there are five cellae, all excepting the Gaṇapati cella, empty. The organisation is such that Gaṇapati occupied the pivotal place. The other caves being empty, it is difficult to identify the four deities originally housed there in. Possibly, they were Śiva, Devī, Skanda and Viṣṇu.

The image of Gaṇapati is seated in *lalitāsana* attitude and *iṭampuri*. He is *caturbhuja*, holding *akṣamālā, paraśu* (back hands), *laḍḍus* and *danta*, the stylus. The Lord wears *kaṅkanas, keyūras, naga-udarabandha* and *kiṅkiṇies*. He also wears a big necklace. Two attendants, one a male and the other female, stand on both sides of the Lord.

Buddhist Caves

The *tīntāl* Cave XI in its second floor consists of some stray Hindu carvings on its left wall section. One of them depicts Gaṇapati in seated aspect. The Lord is seated with palms of both legs joining together. It is not clear whether the Lord is endowed with two heads. The proboscis seems to move on both sides. The two back hands of the Lord hold eatables. It may be a later carving when attempts were made to rededicate some of the Buddhist caves in Ellora to the Hindu gods. The stray carvings found on walls of the staircase in Cave XV may also of the same date as on stylistic grounds these miniature are analogous.

BHOKARDĀN

A Hindu septa-cellar cave, the left extremity of its left side wall houses an image of Skanda. Most images in the cave are dilapidated. The features of Skanda are not clear. He is found next to a faint impression of Umāsahitamūrti. The image measures about three and a half feet in height. It is a *samapāda-sthānaka* image. The hands are two, holding a *daṇḍa* (or *śakti* ?) in one with the other in *ūru-hasta* attitude. The Lord is attended by a woman and a dwarf being.

AURAṄGĀBĀD, MĀHŪR AND TĀKLI ḌHOKEŚVARA

Auraṅgābād is one of the few centres wherein Gaṇapati is enshrined on the back wall of the cella, according the elephantine God *garbhagṛha* status. Originally a Buddhist cave, it was rededicated to Gaṇapati and the Sakti goddesses. Gaṇapati found on the back wall of the shrine is of the usual typology. Seated in *lalitāsana* posture and *iṭampuri*, the Lord is *caturbhuja* but the features are worn out. The front left hand seems to have carried the pot of *laḍḍus*. What is of special interest in the cave is that the Lord is flanked by two images of the Śakti goddessess, Mahiṣāsuramardinī to the left and possibly Durgā to the right. The right side wall of the cave provides the venue for the Mātṛkas who are standing as in the *Rāvulaphaḍi* cave in Aihole.

The *Pāṇḍuleṇi* of Māhūr provide for a cella of the elephantine God in an auxiliary shrine on the north side of the main cave. The door frame of the main cave consists of several carvings as found in the Jogeśvarī cave. These figures include the various manifestations of Śiva such as Gaṅgādhara, Ardhanārīśvara, Naṭarāja, Tripurāntakamūrti and Kārttikeya.

The Ḍhokeśvara Mahādeva cave at Tākli Ḍhokeśvara provides for a panel of the Mātṛkas on its right side wall. The seven Devīs are flanked by Vīrabhadra (right) and Gaṇapati (left) in the usual pattern. The Lord, Gaṇapati is seated in *lalitāsana* and *iṭampuri*. He is *dvibhuja* and holds the *danta* (right) and pot of *laḍḍus*. Among the other important iconographical illustrations in the cave is an image of Naṭarāja who is flanked by miniatures of Gaṇapati and Skanda as they appear in the *Rāvulaphaḍi* cave at Aihole. Next to Gaṇapati in the Sapta Mātṛkas enclave, an image of Kāla appears as in the Ellora caves (Nos. XIV, XXI and XXII). The local people call him Skanda but the features do not support any such claim. The Lord is emaciated and bony. He is *dvibhuja*, holding the *kapālapātra* and a sickle. With regard to similar carvings in the Ellora caves and the Mahākūṭa Gateway, he may be identified with Kāla.

CONSOLIDATION

Images of Gaṇapati appear in huge numbers when compared with Skanda. Similarly, Gaṇapati acquires a definitive cult value in Upper Deccan as we find not less than six caves in four centres, dedicated to the elephantine God. There is a solitary evidence of a subcella (Cave XXI of Ellora) being dedicated to Skanda but the impressions of the image are beyond identification and yet with due emphasis to its axial alignment with Gaṇapati, there is every possibility of considering it as a shrine for Skanda. Both the deities still retain their links with cults of the higher order such as Śaivism and Śāktam. It is because both Gaṇapati and Skanda in several instances appear as part and parcel of a bigger unit rather than independently. Both as members of Naṭarāja or Kailāsanātha (or Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti) and other forms of Śiva still retain their affinity with the family of Śiva. The miniature of Gaṇapati, forming part of Devī's lotus emblem is a significant representation. It is an eye-opener to the riddles centering around the origin of Gaṇapati and seems to provide vital clues with regard to the *Śiva Purāṇam* episode according to which the elephantine God is believed to have originated from a lump of the bodily impurities of Devī. The analogy between the lump and lotus is indeed thought-provoking. The association of the Gaṇapati and Skanda cults with Devī is pointed out by the motifs that place both the male gods with the female in an axial alignment. Furthermore, Gaṇapati is part and parcel of the Sapta Mātṛkas, which is a pan-Indian tradition. Starting from Udayagiri, the threads of unity of thought go upto Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam in the Far South.

The impact of the Udayagiri prototypes on the art of Upper Deccan with regard to Gaṇapati is tremendous. Three important coincidences are to be noted in this regard. They are: (1) Gaṇapati appearing independently, (2) Gaṇapati as a member of the Sapta Mātṛkas and (3) Gaṇapati and Mahiṣāsuramardinī juxtaposed. Gaṇapati and Skanda facing each other is a new element that Ellora (Caves XV, XXI and XXII) introduces.

Quantitatively speaking, Ellora takes the place of prominence wherein images of both Skanda and Gaṇapati are concentrated. Especially in the case of Gaṇapati, Ellora is the only place wherein all sub-variables under the head are to be traced. Next in order of importance are Elephanta and Jogeśvarī. From the cult point of view Jogeśvarī, Ellora, Auraṅgābād and Māhūr are important. Perhaps, it is in the Upper Deccan that shrines dedicated to Gaṇapati are to be found in huge numbers. Chronologically speaking, Jogeśvarī provides the vital clues for exchange of both artistic and cult idioms from Udayagiri in central India to the Upper Deccan and the Far South via Lower Deccan.

Iconographically speaking, there is some kind of Deccani tradition. Images of Gaṇapati are mostly seated in *lalitāsana, iṭampuri* and *caturbhuja*. It is in imitation of the Udayagiri school. The few instances of *sthānaka* images are miniatures clubbed with major Śaivite carvings. We have no evidence of any independent and major *sthānaka* image of Gaṇapati as in the Tirucirāppaḷḷi lower cave. Similarly, images of Skanda are mostly *sthānaka*. The association of goat-headed beings with Skanda in Elephanta and Ellora (No. XXI) caves is exceptional. Similarly, the association of a Devī with Skanda in the Elephanta cave is a point for minute observation because in the Tirupparaṅkunṟam and Āṉaimalai caves in Tamil Nadu the Lord appears with his consorts in *garbhagṛhas*. These show the stages of development with regard to the cult of Skanda.

From the statistical analysis it is clear that the cult of Gaṇapati was very popular when compared with Skanda in the Upper Deccan.

REFERENCES

1. K.V. Soundararajan, *Cave Temples of the Deccan*, p. 92.
2. She may as well represent Devasena, the Lord's spouse, whose presence could be justified with due reference to the representations in the caveṣ of Tamil Nadu like Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam and Āṉaimalai (Cave II). The presence of Brahmā and Viṣṇu may justify the fact that the present image of Skanda represents his Kalyāṇasundara aspect.
3. Also called *mūlasthāna*, the member is called in Tamil *paṭai*. At times floral motifs are found in such locations in Cōḻa temples and so it is called *malariṭai* (*malar* 'flower').
4. These images seem to take the place of *kṣetrapālakas*. In Cōḻa temples miniatures of Nandi appear. Nandi usually appears on the *tirumatil* that would point out his status as a guardian deity like the *kṣetrapālaka*.

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF ICONOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES: UPPER DECCAN

GAṆAPATI

Iconographical variables	Distribution pattern - placewise								
	Ele.	Jog.	Man.	Ell.	Bho.	Aur.	Mah.	TD	Total
independent	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	9
housed in cella	-	1	-	3	-	1	1	-	6
p/o Mātṛkas	1	1	-	4	-	-	-	1	7
jux. Mahiṣāmardinī	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3
p/o Naṭarāja	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	4
p/o Rāvaṇānugraha	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	3
p/o Dice Game	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
p/o Gajasaṁhāramūrti	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
p/o Kalyāṇasundara	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
p/o pillars/*kūḍu*	1	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	5
p/o Devī's emblem (Āyudha-puruṣa ?)	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total	4	3	2	27	-	1	2	2	41

SKANDA

Iconographical variables	Distribution pattern - placewise								
	Ele.	Jog.	Man.	Ell.	Bho.	Aur.	Mah.	TD	Total
independent	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	4
housed in cella	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Somāskanda	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
p/o Naṭarāja	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
p/o Kailāsanātha	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
jux. Mahiṣāmardini	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total	2	1	-	4	1	-	1	1	10

Abbreviations

Ele - Elephanta
Jog - Jogeśvarī
Man - Maṇḍapeśvara
Ell - Ellora
Bho - Bhokardān
Aur - Auraṅgābād
TD - Tākli Ḍhokeśvara
p/o - part of
jux. - juxtaposed

5. K.V. Soundararajan, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
6. By the name, Greater Bombay (now Mumbai) we mean the entire coastal and hilly region upto Pune in the South to Kanheri in the North.
7. The proboscis is counted as the fifth hand. So, the Lord is called *aiṅkaraṉ* 'five handed' in Tamil. A popular Gaṇapati *dhyāna-śloka* begins with the phrase *Aintukarattaṉai āṉaimukattaṉai* 'Thou, the Lord, five handed and elephant-faced ...'
8. *Danta* is half the Lord's tusk which he cut in order to write down the verses of the *Mahābhārata* as dictated by sage, Vyāsa. According to tradition, it is believed that Gaṇapati cut half the tusk from his own mouth when he served as a scribe to Vyāsa to take down the latter's dictations. In all Gaṇapati images the Lord's right tusk is half while the left is full.
9. *Modaka* is a sweet cake of which Gaṇapati is very fond. It is made of rice flour and a sweet mixture. Oblations to Gaṇapati consist of the eatable, called *koḻukkaṭṭai* in Tamil. The Gaṇapati - *aṣṭottaram*, a *nāmāvali* consisting of 108 names, lists the epithet *modakapriyāya namaḥ* 'one fond of *modaka*'.
10. Elephants in temple are fitted with ringing bells to their legs. When they move a musical sound is generated. The Tamil proverb is *Yāṉai varum piṉṉē maṇi ōcai varum muṉṉē* 'the elephant follows whose arrival is forecasted by the ringing bells'. He has the *ghaṇṭa* fitted to one of the hands, that being an emblem of the elephant.
11. The elephant's anklets consist of bells, cf. n. 10.
12. The posture in which the Lord, Gaṇapati, has the left leg rested on pedestal and the right knee in *ūrdhva* attitude is called *lalitāsana*. For illustration see V. Ganapati Sthapati, *Ciṟppaccennūl*, p. 59 (fig. c). Women usually sit on the floor in such a posture in Tamil Nadu. It is typical of women and no man sits like that.
13. K.V. Soundararajan, *op. cit.*, p. 189, fig. C b.
14. For an account of the origin of Gaṇapati, based on the *Śiva Purāṇa*, see T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. I, Pt. I, pp. 36-7.
15. *Laḍḍu* is a sweet cake. It is not the same as *modaka*. In both cases the preparation is completely different. Oil is used for preparing *laḍḍu* while *modaka* (*koḻukkaṭṭai*) is boiled. *Modaka* is in a way the same as Tamil *iṭṭili* mixed with sweet. Both being different, it is to be questioned whether in North Indian tradition *laḍḍu* is associated with Gaṇapati or *modaka*, probably, *modaka* is typical of the Far South.
16. K.V. Soundararajan, *op. cit* ., p. 82 fig.

CHAPTER III

Iconographical Survey: Lower Deccan and the Kṛṣṇā Delṫ

Images of Gaṇapati and Skanda are forthcoming from Badāmī, Aihole, Mahākūta, Paṭṭadakkal, Moghulrājapuram and Bhairavakoṇḍa in the lower Deccan. Most impressive among these centers are Moghulrājapuram, Bhairavakoṇḍa and Vijayavāḍa. In these places, the images of Gaṇapati are found *in situ*. There is a heavy centration of Gaṇapati images in Aihole but most of them are in the site musum. The same is the case with Alampūr. In Badāmī few images of Gaṇapati appear as a member of a bigger unit as for example in relation to Mahiṣāsuramardinī or Naṭarāja but independent representations are rare. There are few specimens in the Badāmī site museum. The same is the case with Paṭṭadakkal. Generally speaking, the Lower Deccan is not so good for a study of Gaṇapati and Skanda imagery as the Upper Deccan or as for the matter the Far South.

BADĀMĪ (Pl. V.1)

In the cave and structural temples of Badāmī no independent representation of either Gaṇapati or Skanda is to be found. All those appearing *in situ* are miniature carvings.

Cave I (Pl. VII.2):

There are two interesting pieces of Gaṇapati and one of Skanda, appearing as members of Mahiṣāsuramardinī and Naṭarāja.

The image of Mahiṣāsurmardinī, appearing in a separate enclosure to the left side of the cave, is subjoined by images of Gaṇapati (left) and Skanda (right) (Pl. XIV.1-2). The pattern of alignment is important as both the divinities appear facing each other as found in few of the Ellora Caves (e.g., no. XV Daśāvatāra).

The image of Gaṇapati is about 3' in height and *dvibhuja*. The Lord is seated in *lalitāsana* (Pl. XIV.1). The left hand holds a vessel of *laḍḍus* with the proboscis placed on them. The right hand in *siṁhakarṇa* attitude holds the *danta*. The Lord wears a big necklace, *uttarīya* and *nāga-udarabandha*. The *mastaka* of the elephantine part of the figure is adorned with a floral motif, comparable to the fully blossomed lotus on head of Kevala-Nṛsiṁha in Cave III of Badāmī.

Skanda is seated on the *mayūra* (Pl. XIV.2). The figure is in profile with the Lord's head alone frontal. The ornaments include a *karaṇḍamakuṭa, uttarīya,* a big necklace, *kaṅkanas* and *keyūras*. The Lord is *dvibhuja* and has the left rested on the bird's plumage. The right perhaps is holding the reins to ride the bird. He is seated in a peculiar posture, the knee of the left leg bent with the buttocks resting on the ankle.

The *bas relief*, illustrating Naṭarāja, found on the left side of the Mahiṣāsuramardinī enclave, includes a miniature of *sthānaka*-Gaṇapati. The image is one of the rare type of standing Gaṇapati in Lower Deccan. The composition is very simple and elegant. The hands are two with the right in *gajahasta* attitude. The left hand is lifted upto the hip level in *tarjanimudrā*. The proboscis is bent on the right side and so *valampuri*. The head is surrounded by a halo. The image is about 1.5' in height.

The other caves in Badāmī are Vaiṣṇava and do not include any illustration relating to Gaṇapati or Skanda. However, in one of the pillars of Cave II a miniature of Skanda, flying on his peacock vehicle is found. The image measures about 1.5' in height. He is *caturbhuja* and holds a *triśūla* in the right *pūrvahasta*. Though a miniature it is an important evidence for *caturbhuja* Skanda.

Site Museum:

In the Badāmī site museum four stray pieces of Gaṇapati are found. Two of them are dated in the 10th century A.D. The other two appear to be early medieval specimens. Perhaps, they were brought from the structural temples found in the vicinity.

One of the images, dated in the 9th century A.D., is seated in *lalitāsana* attitude and *iṭampuri*. The hands are four, holding *puṣtaka, danta* (right), stencil and *modaka* (left). The Lord wears a *nāga-udarabandha*, big necklace and anklets. The Lord's vehicle, the bandicoot, is found below.

Bhūtanātha Complex:

A few yards away from the Bhūtanātha temple, located at the eastern edge of the lake, some stray carvings are found on the northern slopes of a rock. These interesting carvings include the model of a cave temple with the images of Gaṇapati and Mahiṣāsuramardinī at the *façade* level as found in few of the Ellora caves (e.g. XVII and XXI B), resembling the tiny caves of the Gupta Udayagiri group.

Gaṇapati found on the right side of the small cella is in *sthānaka* attitude. The image is about 3' in height. The Lord is *dvibhuja* holding the *aṅkuśa* (left) and *paraśu* (right). He wears the usual ornaments which includes a *nāga-udarabandha*, a big necklace, ankelts and *mekhala*. It may be noted that it is one of the *sthānaka* type of the Lord in Lower Deccan who is oriented with Mahiṣāsuramardinī. There is a better illustration in the Tiruccirāppaḷḷi lower cave.

It is important to note in the metropolitan zone of Cāḷukyan art not even a single image of Gaṇapati appears in any one of the cave or structural temples *in situ* occupying a dignified status that may amount to any kind of cult value being accorded to the elephantine God. That is to say no image occupies either the *garbhagṛha* or gets an important place in any part of the temple excepting the one found on the rock of the Bhūtanātha temple complex. The observation is essential to make an assessment of the Gaṇapati cult in Tamil Nadu because the Tamils believe that the said cult was introduced from Vātāpi (Badāmī) at the time of Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ I, after his sack of Pulakeśi's metropolis. The Lord is to this day known in Tamil tradition as Vātāpi-Gaṇapati (*Vide*, Annexure).

Before winding up of our study of Gaṇapati at Badāmī, it may be added that K.V. Soundararajan, quoting A. Sundara, adds that the Lower Śivālaya of Badāmī was a temple dedicated to Gaṇapati.[1] The generalization is based on the type of pedestal found in the temple, which is oval, a type meant for Gaṇapati images in āgamic sources. He also quotes G.M. Tartakov, according to whom, the temple was Vaiṣṇava. The date assigned on the basis of stylistic features of architectural mouldings is the first half of the 7th century A.D. On these grounds K.V. Soundararajan suggests that the concept of Vātāpi-Gaṇapati is justifiable because Appar has a reference to Ciṟuttoṇṭar bringing Gaṇapati from Vātāpi. Though the subject is reserved for a detailed discussion in another place, certain questions need to be posed right now: In which hymn Appar refers to Gaṇapati brought by Ciṟuttoṇṭar? Will the stylistic examination of architectural mouldings be sufficient enough to fix the chronology of a temple? Do not we require other corroborative evidences?

MAHĀKŪṬA

None of the temples in Mahākūṭa house images of Gaṇapati and Skanda in any of the sections *in situ*. There is a Nandi-*maṇḍapa* at the entrance to the Mahākūṭeśvara temple. In front of this *maṇḍapa* there is a stray piece of Gaṇapati, placed upon a pedestal. The Lord is *dvibhuja*, holding the stencil in right hand and *modaka* in left. The proboscis is turned leftwise and so the typology is *iṭampuri*. The Lord is seated in *lalitāsana*. There is another stray image of Gaṇapati in the temple tank. The tank in a *maṇḍapa*-like structure houses an image of Caturmukha-Liṅga. Close to the spot the stray piece is to be found. It is of the usual type that we come across in Badāmī.

PAṬṬADAKKAL (Pl. VII.1)

It is indeed very strange that Paṭṭadakkal is not a place for study of Gaṇapati and Skanda images though a variety of the forms of Śiva and Viṣṇu appear. There are few (totally three) isolated pieces, two on wall sections of the Virupākṣa and Pāpanātha temples and a stray piece.

The Virūpākṣa temple in its right wall section houses *Nāṭya* (dancing) Gaṇapati (Pl. XVII.2). The image is actually frontal but the head is in profile.The Lord is endowed with two hands, the left in *kaṭihasta* attitude. The right leg is lifted as though dancing.

The Kāśi-Viśvanātha temple on its door-frame has a figure of *sthānaka*-Gaṇapati. A miniature of Tirupurāntakamūrti found on a pillar section in the temple's *maṇḍapa* includes Gaṇapati, appearing on the chariot, which is a very rare idiom.

Another specimen of *Nāṭya*-Gaṇapati appears on the left wall section of the Pāpanātha temple. The Lord has the right leg lifted. The number of hands are four, holding the *paraśu*, *akṣamālā*, *modaka* and *danta*. The proboscis is turned to the left and so *iṭampuri*. The ornaments include *uttarīya*, *udarabandha*, *kaṅkanas*, *keyūras* and *kiṅkiṇis*.

A stray carving of Gaṇapati is found within the *kūḍu* section of a slab that is likely to have formed part of a temple in Paṭṭadakkal. The image is *caturbhuja*, seated in *lalitāsana*.

Though the absence of Skanda and Gaṇapati in Paṭṭadakkal is conspicuous, a rare instance of Somāskandamūrti appearing on the ceiling of the *mukhamaṇḍapa* is the Kāśi-Viśvanātha temple. Śiva and Umā are seated in the same posture as in Ellora (Cave XVI). The zoomorphic *nandi* is present. Paṭṭadakkal is said to have derived lot of inspiration from Kāñcīpuram. The element under consideration is solid enough to prove the Cāḷukya indebtedness to the Pallava forerunner in temple architecture and iconography.[2]

AIHOLE (Pl. III.2)

Aihole is the only place in the core Cāḷukyan territory important for a study of Gaṇapati imagery. Not less than a dozen images are found in the local site museum, few of them accessioned and many more lying in front of the building.

Rāvulaphaḍi Cave:

The cave temple in a special enclave for Naṭarāja includes an image of Gaṇapati and Skanda, both standing on either side of the Cosmic Dancer.

Gaṇapati is a miniature, measuring about 2' in height, *sthānaka* and *dvibhuja*. Short and stout, he holds a stencil in the right and a vessel of *laḍḍus* in left. The proboscis is turned to the left and so *iṭampuri*. The Lord wears rich ornaments, a short loin cloth as do the Mātṛkas associated with Naṭarāja, *uttarīya* and a crown. It is interesting to find out the Mātṛkas who include Gaṇapati within their family, attend on Naṭarāja and bring within his family fold not only Gaṇapati but also Skanda.

Skanda appears on the left side of Naṭarāja. He is in his juvenile form and stands erect. He is decorated with chain, fitted with a pendant, apparing on the chest.[3]

Ucchimalli-Guḍi:

The *mukhamaṇḍapa* of the temple on its ceiling houses Skanda (Pl. XXX.1), the only one of its type to be found at such a location in the entire range of early medieval art. The slab containing the illustration measures about 3' x 3'. Skanda is found seated on his *mayūra* vehicle. The Lord is *dvibhuja*, holding a *daṇḍa* (or *śakti* ?) and flowers.[4] There are two garland-bearers above and a *bhakta* below who has the hands folded in *añjalibandha*. The Lord is seated on the bird in *mahārājalīlāsana* attitude and seems to be engaged in slaughtering demons. The *āyudha* held in right hand is in *prayoga* attitude. Two demons are found, one trampled by the peacock and the other still resisting Skanda. The Lord wears a *kirīṭamakuṭa*, *kaṇṭhahāra*, a big necklace, *uttarīya* and shorts. The figures of both the warrior god and the bird are in profiles. Thematically speaking, it is one of the most outstanding pieces in early medieval art as it relates to the rendition of demons though there are no definitive clues to identify the actual subject.

The step-well, found in front of the Ucchimalli-*guḍi*, in two slabs of the parapet illustrates figures of a divinity, seated on peacock (Pl. XXX.1). Both are likely to be Skanda, spoken with reference to the several other specimens that have been spotted in the core Cāḷukyan zone of art. Both are miniatures, measuring about a feet in height. One of the images in profile represents the Lord, holding a *śakti*. The other holds the hands in *abhaya* and *varada mudrās*.

Other Temples:

Though there are a number of temples in Aihole, decorated with a wealth of iconographical illustrations relating to Śiva, Viṣṇu and Śakti Goddess nothing significant for a study of Gaṇapati and Skanda imagery is to be found. The Jyotirliṅga group of temples in one of the pillared *maṇḍapas* house two broken images of Gaṇapati, placed side by side. Both are seated in *lalitāsana*, *dvibhuja* and *iṭampuri*. Another temple found in front of Meghūti (Mallikārjuna group) houses a seated image of Gaṇapati in the usual type at the lower level of the door jam. The Lord is *caturbhuja*, holding *triśūla*, *ṭaṅka* and *modaka*. Another subshrine in the Kont-*guḍi* complex accommodates an image of Gaṇapati on the left side of the lintel. The other side is occupied by Mahiṣāsuramardinī (Pl. XVII.1). The Lord is seated in *lalitāsana* and *caturbhuja*. He is *iṭampuri*. He holds the *paraśu*, *ṭaṅka*, *modaka* and *danta*. He wears a crown and *uttarīya*. A miniature (6") Gaṇapati appears within a *kūḍu*-like motif on a pillar of another shrine. The Lord is *caturbhuja* and *iṭampuri*.

Aihole Museum:

Perhaps the largest collection of Gaṇapati images in the metropolitan Cāḷukyan zone is found in the Aihole Museum, most of them scattered over the area around the Museum building. Not less than a dozen such images are there. Few of them are housed within the Museum building (Pls. XV - XVI).

Most of these images are independent and some (not less than 6) members of the Mātṛkas. The independent images are two or four handed. They are seated in *lalitāsana* and *iṭampuri*.

The largest number of *dvibhuja* images are from the Aihole museum. In the two hands the Lord holds the *modaka* (left) and *danta* (right). One of the pieces housed in the Museum building holds a *pāśa*, the upper part of which has an anthropomorphic carving that presents an aspect of the personified noose. The Lord wears the usual ornaments such as *kaṇṭhahāra* and *nāga-udarabandha*. One of the pieces found in front of the museum is a remarkable composition. It looks like a lump of stone (Pl. XV.1). The sculptor has very ingeniously worked out the piece by just removing that part of the sand-stone, sufficient enough to make out the hands, legs, the elephantine head, the tossing winnow-like ears and the proboscis. The form is such that it presents an archaic version of the elephantine God. The image is important from the ritual point of view. Usually in Hindu families, they create an instant Gaṇapati with a lump of turmeric paste or cowdung. The present image recalls to mind such a shapeless form of the God.

Images associated with the Mātṛkas (not less than 6) are *caturbhuja*, *iṭampuri* and seated in *lalitāsana*.

The museum image illustrating *Kumārasaṁbhava* is the only one of its kind, discussed in the volume dealing with the Śakti Goddesses. There is another piece of a broken sculpture in front of the museum that depicts Skanda seated on his peacock vehicle. It appears to be a *caturbhuja* image, seated in *sukhāsana*. The head and hands are broken.

ALAMPŪR

Alampūr in Eastern Cāḷukyan zone is somewhat better for a study of Gaṇapati images *in situ*. Besides, few pieces are lodged in the site museum.

The Bāla-Brahmā temple on the right side of its *garbhagṛha* has an enclave for the Mātṛkas in which group an image of Gaṇapati is found (Pl. XXXIII.1). A life-size image, it represents the Lord seated in the usual mode. He is *caturbhuja*, holding the *paraśu*, *modaka*, *pāśa* and *akṣamālā*.

The image of Naṭarāja, appearing on the left front wall *koṣṭha* of the Svarga-Brahmā temple, includes a miniature of *Nāṭya* Gaṇapati. Of the few specimens on the subject, it is notable because the Lord has his right hand thrown across the body in *gajahasta* attitude. The left hand is in *siṁhakarṇa* posture. The proboscis is thrown on the right side in the tossing attitude that truly is *gajahasta*. The Lord has the legs arranged in *ardhamaṇḍali* mode.

The *garbhagṛha* of the Padma-Brahmā temple on the walls houses images of Gaṇapati (right *koṣṭha*) and Skanda (back *koṣṭha*). Gaṇapati is of the usual seated type, *iṭampuri*, *lalitāsana* and *caturbhuja*. The four hands hold the *akṣamālā*, *modaka* and *paraśu*. One of front hands is rested on the knee. Skanda is a standing *tribhaṅga* image. He is *caturbhuja*, holding *śakti* and *akṣamālā* in *parahastas*. The front right hand is in *ūruhasta* attitude. The left hand holds an illegible object. The Lord's vehicle, *mayūra*, stands behind and is zoomorphic.

The group of Mātṛkas in the Kumāra-Brahmā temple includes Gaṇapati who is seated in the usual posture. He is *caturbhuja*, holding the *danta*, *modaka* and *paraśu*. The Lord's vehicle, the *mūṣika* 'bandicoot' (cf. Badāmī Cave I), appears below which idiom makes it a rare typology among the various images of the early medieval period. The Lord wears a *nāga-udarabandha*. The stray pieces found in the Arka-Brahmā temple complex includes a specimen of the *Mātṛkas*, including Gaṇapati.

Site Museum:

There are few pieces of the Mātṛkas and one each of Gaṇapati (Pl. XXXIII.2) and Skanda in the Alampūr site museum. One of the representations of the Mātṛkas, includes a figure of Gaṇapati.

TWO STRAY PIECES

Before taking up the Kṛṣṇā delta, it may be of some importance to take note of two rare pieces of Gaṇapati, reported *in situ* in the North Canara district in Karṇāṭaka (Pl. XI). One is from Gokarṇa and the other Iḍaguñji. The Gokarṇa piece is dated in the 3rd century A.D. and the Iḍaguñji piece 4th-5th century A.D. Both the images are *sthānaka* and stand on an oval stone pedestal that in turn is placed on a rectangular slab. They are housed in *garbhagṛhas*. Iconographically speaking both subscribe to the same norms. The Lord is *dvibhuja*, holding the *danta* (right) and *modaka* (left). The left tusk is half cut. The proboscis is turned to the left and placed on *modaka*. The Lord wears a *dhoti*-like loin cloth and *vastra-yajñopavīta*. The ears are winnow-like and the head bereft of any tiara but the back part is formed like a *śirascakra*, which consists of locks of hair. Both the images are short and bulky with the body disproportionately elongated when compared with the head and legs. The stance is *abhaṅga*.

The date suggested for the images (3rd to 5th century A.D.) is a problem to reckon with in the history of Gaṇapati imagery in Lower Deccan. Next to Udayagiri, Gaṇapati appears in the Jogeśvarī caves. If the date suggested for the Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji images could be approved, it goes without saying that they pre-date the Gupta tradition of Udayagiri. It is difficult to accept the date in support of which the following issues are raised:

1. Why in the core zone of Cāḷukyan art no image of Gaṇapati is to be found in *garbhagṛhas* when earlier examples (e.g., the two specimens under consideration) were there?
2. Why in Cāḷukyan tradition, both Upper and Lower Deccan, *sthānaka* images are not that popular while the earliest specimens are of this type?
3. Will the *dvibhuja* aspect be sufficient enough to predate them as some scholars do[5] when we have other examples of the same type both in the Deccan (*supra*) and the Far South?[6]

The earliest cave temples of the Hindu lineage start from the middle of the 6th century A.D. in Arvalam (Goa) and Badāmī according to K.V. Soundararajan. According to Walter Spink, Jogeśvarī falls in the post-Vākāṭaka period. The Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi image of Gaṇapati being *dvibhuja* (dated in the early 5th century A.D.), it is difficult to assign such an early date to the two images under study. Logically speaking, they will have to be assigned to a date, may be falling in tune with Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi towards the end of the 5th century A.D. or the early 6th century.

THE KṚṢṆĀ DELTA

When compared with the Western Cāḷukyan core zone in the around Badāmī, the Kṛṣṇā delta of the Eastern Cāḷukyas, especially Vijayavāda, Moghulrājapuram and Bhairavakoṇḍa, is rich in Gaṇapati images. Regarding Skanda, it is disappointing to note that not even a single piece is forthcoming. The observation has to be underlined because the archaeologists who dug the Nāgārjunakoṇḍa valley have unearthed the earliest evidences of a temple and images of Kārttikeya.[7] In Tamil Nadu though the earliest stratum of literature speaks much of Kumara (T. Murukaṉ), his temples and images (*supra*, Chap. I), no temple or iconic piece earlier than the 7th century A.D. has survived.

VIJAYAVĀḌA AND MOGHULRĀJAPURAM (Pl. V.2)

The lower cave of the Akkaṇṇa-Madaṇṇa group houses a life size image of Gaṇapati in the side wall of its right extremity. The notable iconic piece is utterly dilapitated.

Carved against the background of a rectangular frame, the image is *caturbhuja* and seated in *ardhapadmāsana* attitude. The back two hands presumably had the *aṅkuśa* and *pāśa*. The front right hand perhaps had the *modaka* upon which the proboscis is placed, making the image *valampuri*, a southern idiom, popular with the Pāṇḍyan types. The front left hand perhaps had the broken tusk or another *modaka* according to K.V. Soundararajan.[8]

Cave II in Moghulrājapuram on the right outer section of the cave houses an image of Gaṇapati (about 2' in height) in the *lalitāsana* attitude, typical of the Western Cāḷukyan style. The lord is *caturbhuja*, holding the *aṅkuśa* and *paraśu* in *parahastas*. The front right hand holds the *modaka* upon which the proboscis is placed. That is to say the image is *valampuri*. The left *pūrvahasta* holds a broken tusk (cf. the Akkaṇṇa-Madaṇṇa piece above).

Cave IV in Moghulrājapuram in its left side consists of mini-cave temple on the back wall of which the Trimūrtis are carved; the Liṅga in centre, *trimukha*-Brahmā to the right and *sthānaka*-Viṣṇu to the left. There are two reliefs on either side of the Trimūrtis. The right one is that of Mahiṣāsuramardinī and the left Gaṇapati, a pattern of iconographic programme that is popular with the art of Ellora.

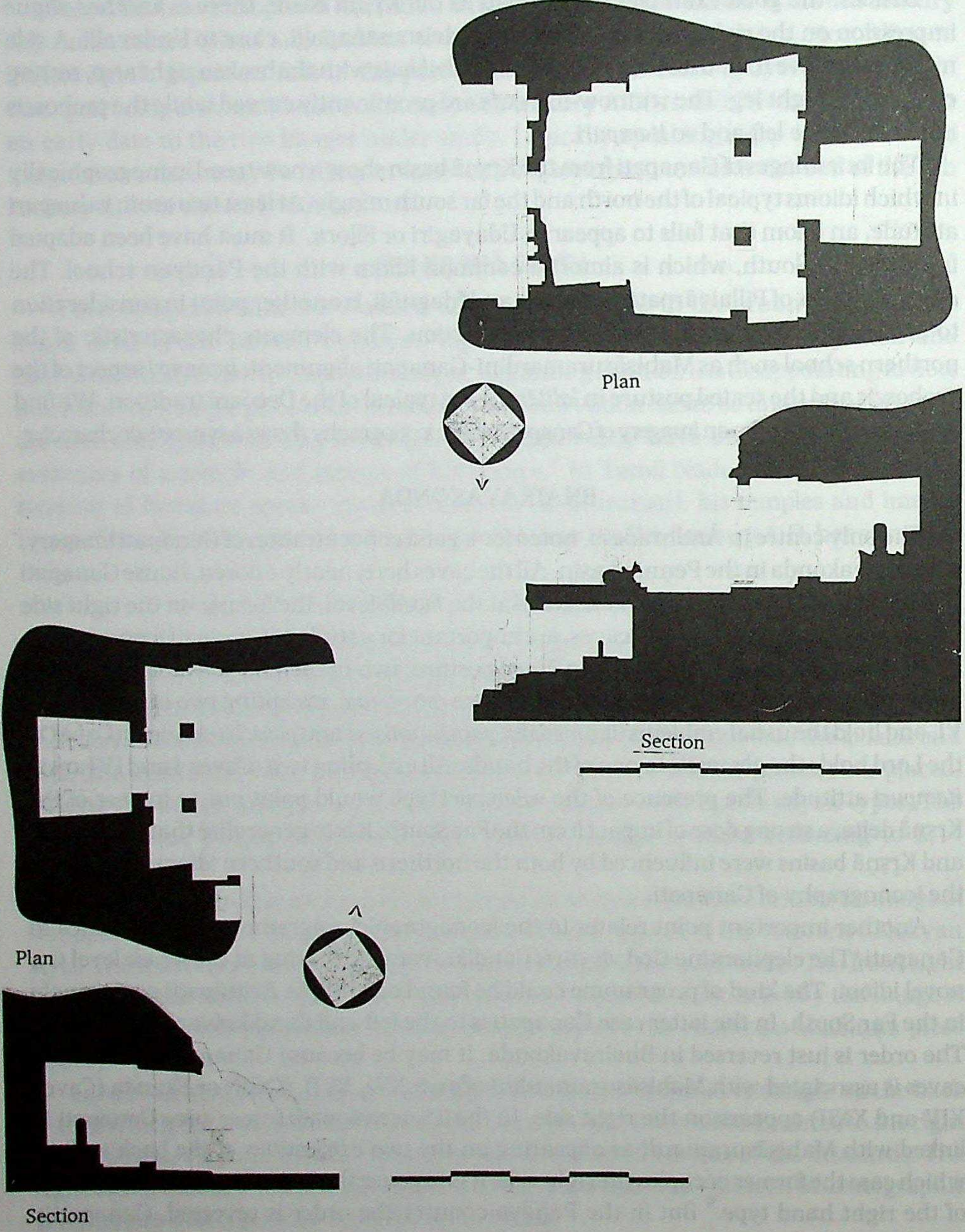
Besides, the good examples of Gaṇapati in the Kṛṣṇā basin, there is another vague impression on the right bank of the river at Adviṣomanapaḷḷi, close to Uṇḍavalli. A side niche, near Cave II, houses the image which is *dvibhuja* with the broken right arm, resting on the lifted right leg. The winnow-like ears are prominently carved while the proboscis is turned to the left and so *iṭampuri*.

The four images of Gaṇapati from the Kṛṣṇā basin show a new trend iconographically in which idioms typical of the north and the far south mingle. At least two are in *valampuri* attitude, an idiom that fails to appear in Udayagiri or Eḷḷora. It must have been adapted from the Far South, which is almost a common idiom with the Pāṇḍyan school. The *dvibhuja* aspect of Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi, Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji, is another point in consideration to prove the channels of north-south interaction. The elements characteristic of the northern school such as Mahiṣāsuramardinī-Gaṇapati alignment, *iṭampuri* aspect of the proboscis and the seated posture in *lalitāsana* are typical of the Deccani tradition. We find in the lower Kṛṣṇā delta an imagery of Gaṇapati whose iconography shows a syncretistic character.

BHAIRAVAKOṆḌA

The only centre in Āndhradeśa, noted for a good concentration of Gaṇapati imagery, is Bhairavakoṇḍa in the Peṇṇār basin. All the caves here, nearly a dozen, house Gaṇapati (Pl. XVIII.1, XXXIV.1) and Caṇḍikeśvara at the *façade* level, the former on the right side of the caves. All the nine major caves, are important for a study of Gaṇapati iconography. In all these specimens, the Lord is in *āsana* posture, two of them in *padmāsana* as in the Akkaṇṇa-Madaṇṇa cave at Vijayavāḍa. All are *caturbhuja*, excepting two in Caves I and VI, and hold the usual emblems like *modaka, paraśu, aṅkuśa* and *pāśa*. In one case (Cave IX) the Lord holds the *akṣamālā* in one of the hands. All excepting two (Caves I and IV) are in *iṭampuri* attitude. The presence of the *valampuri* type would point out as in case of the Kṛṣṇā delta, a strong dose of impact from the Far South. It is to generalize that the Peṇṇār and Kṛṣṇā basins were influenced by both the northern and southern idioms in shaping the iconography of Gaṇapati.

Another important point relates to the iconographic programme with reference to Gaṇapati. The elephantine God *vis-à-vis* Caṇḍikeśvara, appearing at the *façade* level is a novel idiom. The kind of programme could be found only in the Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi cave temple in the Far South. In the latter case Gaṇapati is to the left and Caṇḍikeśvara to the right. The order is just reversed in Bhairavakoṇḍa. It may be because Gaṇapati in the Ellora caves is associated with Mahiṣāsuramardinī (Caves XVI, XVII, XXIB) or Skanda (Caves XIV and XXII) appears on the right side. In the Tiruccirāppaḷḷi lower cave Gaṇapati is linked with Mahiṣāsuramardī as appearing on the two extremities of the back wall in which case the former occupies the right side. It is to generalize that Gaṇapati is primarily of the right hand type.[9] But in the Pāṇḍya country the order is reversed. Gaṇapati's


Plan
Section
Plan
Section

2. Ground Plan of Caves, Bhairavakoṇḍa

association with Caṇḍikeśvara is typical of the Pāṇḍya country, which means the norm followed by the Bhairavakoṇḍa artists is a southern impact.

CONSOLIDATION

Gaṇapati appears in a better place when compared with Skanda. In this respect the Lower Deccan falls in line with the Upper Deccan. Interestingly enough none of the images of Gaṇapati and Skanda appear in *garbhagṛhas*. The contrasting picture in the two Deccans is remarkable because the Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji specimens are supposed to be in *garbhagṛhas*. Barring these three examples whose date and dedication are disputable, there is no evidence of a temple dedicated to Gaṇapati. The notion popular in the Tamil country regarding the cult of Gaṇapati as an importation from Badāmī (Vātāpi-Gaṇapati), finds no archaeological support.

Thematically, independent representations of Gaṇapati are the most popular. They are mostly seated in the Deccan style. Then comes Gaṇapati in association with Mahiṣāsuramardinī. Gaṇapati and Skanda attending on their belligerent Mother, Mahiṣāsuramardinī, is typical of Badāmī. The specimen found in Cave I, Badāmī, finds no parallel in early medieval art. Another uniqueness of the Badāmī school is *Nāṭya*-Gaṇapati at Paṭṭadakkal. It is interesting to note that Gaṇapati's association with forms of Śiva like Gajasaṁhāramūrti, Kalyāṇasundaramūrti and so on goes on diminishing in the Lower Deccan when compared with Elephanta and Ellora. The only exception is Naṭarāja.

The important centres for concentration of Gaṇapati images are Aihole and Bhairavakoṇḍa. Bhairavakoṇḍa is the only centre within the range of early medieval art wherein the best concentration is found *in situ*. Though most of the caves here and the images of Gaṇapati are small-sized, Bhairavakoṇḍa comes next only to Ellora to examine the facets of both cult and iconography.

The presence of *valampuri* type in Bhairavakoṇḍa, Moghulrājapuram and Badāmī would point out the fact that the southern idiom, popular with the Pāṇḍyan artists, should have travelled from the Far South to the core Cāḷukyan zone via the Peṇṇār basin. Thus, Badāmī felt the impact of a Tamil idiom.

Images of Skanda are all miniatures. Nothing comparable to the life-size pieces of Elephanta and Ellora (Caves, XV, XXI and XXII) are forthcoming from Lower Deccan. No piece occupies the *garbhagṛha*. Of the noteworthy types Mayūravāhana is significant. While in Elephanta and Ellora (e.g. Cave XXI) the peacock just appears behind Skanda, the Lord is mounted on his vehicle in the Lower Deccan. The piece found in Cave I, Badāmī, is unique for representing the Lord in profile. Quantitatively speaking Aihole has yielded the maximum number. Kumārasaṁbhava found in the Aihole museum and Skanda as part of Naṭarāja in the *Rāvulaphaḍi* cave are singularly unique pieces. No image appears in *garbhagṛha*.

TABLE II
DISTRIBUTION OF ICONOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES: LOWER DECCAN

GAṆAPATI

Iconographical variables	Distribution pattern - placewise							Total
	Bad.	Mah.	Pat.	Aih.	Alam.	VMA	Bhai	
Independent	1	1	-	8	2	3	9	24
Nāṭya Gaṇapati	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	3
p/o Mātṛkas	-	-	-	3	3	-	-	6
p/o Mahiṣāmardinī	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
jux. Mahiṣāmardinī	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
p/o Naṭarāja	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
p/o doorframe	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
p/o pillars	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Total	4	1	3	12	6	5	9	40

SKANDA

Iconographical variables	Distribution pattern - placewise							Total
	Bad.	Mah.	Pat.	Aih.	Alam.	VMA	Bhai	
Independent	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
Mayūravāhana	2	-	-	3	-	-	-	5
Somāskanda	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
p/o Naṭarāja	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Kumārasaṁbhava	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Total	2	-	1	5	2	-	-	10

Note: Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji specimens are not included.

Abbreviations:
Bad - Badāmī,
Mah - Mahākūṭa,
Pat - Paṭṭadakkal,
Aih - Aihole,
Alam- Alampūr,
VMA- Vijayavāḍa-Moghulrājapuram-Advisomanapaḷḷi
Bhai - Bhairavakoṇḍa
*p/o *Nāṭya* Gaṇapati

REFERENCES

1. M.W. Meister and M.A. Dhaky eds., *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture: Upper Dravidadesa*, pp. 26-28.
2. Raju Kalidos, Somāskanda and Trimūrti : Parallel Iconographic Concepts, *Hemakuta : Recent Researches in Archaeology and Museuology*, Delhi, 2001, pp. 171-79.
3. Called *pulippal* or *pulinakam* (tooth of tiger or nail of tiger), even now menfolk (only men) in Tamil Nadu add such an ornamental pendant to their necklace. The chain is mostly of gold and the pendant of gold, fitted with the original of a tiger'ş tooth, nail or that of one made of some gem. Attention is invited to such motif found in an image of Naṭarāja, dated in the 8th-9th century A.D., now in the Patna museum. For details see Raju Kalidos, New Dimensions of the Cosmic Dancer, *East and West*, Vol. 40, Nos. 1-4, figs., pp. 335-39. See also Claudine Bautze-Picron, An Unpublished Skanda from Durgāpūr Area-South-west Rajasthan, *South Asian Archaeology*, 1987, ed. Maurizio Taddei (‘Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologiṣts in Western Europe), figs. 1-2, pp. 1067-76. The author identifies the motif with “a leaf-shaped pendant” (*Ibid.*, p. 1068) and quotes other examples of the type and earlier authorities to support her identification. It cannot be accepted because such pendants are still in use in Tamil Nadu and called *pulippal* or *pulinakam*, an ornamental design that hunter communities are likely to have used in bygone times.
4. A similar motif appears in case of the Durgāpūr image, cited in the previous note. Bautze-Picron identifies it with “a fruit or flower-bud” (*op. cit.*, p. 1067) and she is partly correct. It is more fittingly a bundle of flowers (*puṣpabandha*). A similar motif appears in the right hand of Manmatha who holds a bow in the left. The specimen is found in the Āṇṭāḷ shrine at Śrīvilliputtūr. Usually, he is supposed to shoot his bow with an arrow consisting of flowers. The image under study is of the 17th-18th century A.D. but the affinity between the motif and the earlier ones is beyond dispute and shows the persistent tradition of illustrating flower motifs in Indian art.
5. For example Prof. A. Sundara who gave me the photographs of the two images.
6. The Gaṇapati image of the Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi cave temple in Tamil Nadu is a good example. See R. Nagaswamy, “Some Contributions of the Pāṇḍya to South Indian Art”, *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XXVII, 1964, pp. 265-68.
7. H. Sarkar and B.N. Misra, *Nāgārjunakoṇḍa*, pp. 26-7, 71. A broken image of Kārttikeya, attended by cock or peacock and an image of Devasena are preserved in the site museum. These are assigned to the Ikṣavāku period.
8. K.V. Soundararajan, *Cave Temples of the Deccan*, p. 278.
9. Right hand (*valaṅkai*) and left hand (*itaṅkai*) status was known with the Tamil caste organisation and the position of armed corps. Hierarchically speaking *valaṅkai* had an upper hand and *iṭaṅkai* a lower status. The right hand castes were called *valaṅkai* and left hand castes *iṭaṅkai*. The right hand army was called *valaṅkai mahāsēṉai* and the left hand one *iṭaṅkai mahāsēṉai*. The left hand position accorded to Gaṇapati in the Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi cave would point out the hierarchical position of the God *vis-à-vis* Caṇḍikeśvara, the latter only a devotee of Śiva, elevated to god-man status. It would prove that in Bhairavakoṇḍa the order is reversed, adding an importance to Gaṇapati and taking Caṇḍikeśvara to a lower level who was considered not that important in Āndhradeśa.

CHAPTER IV

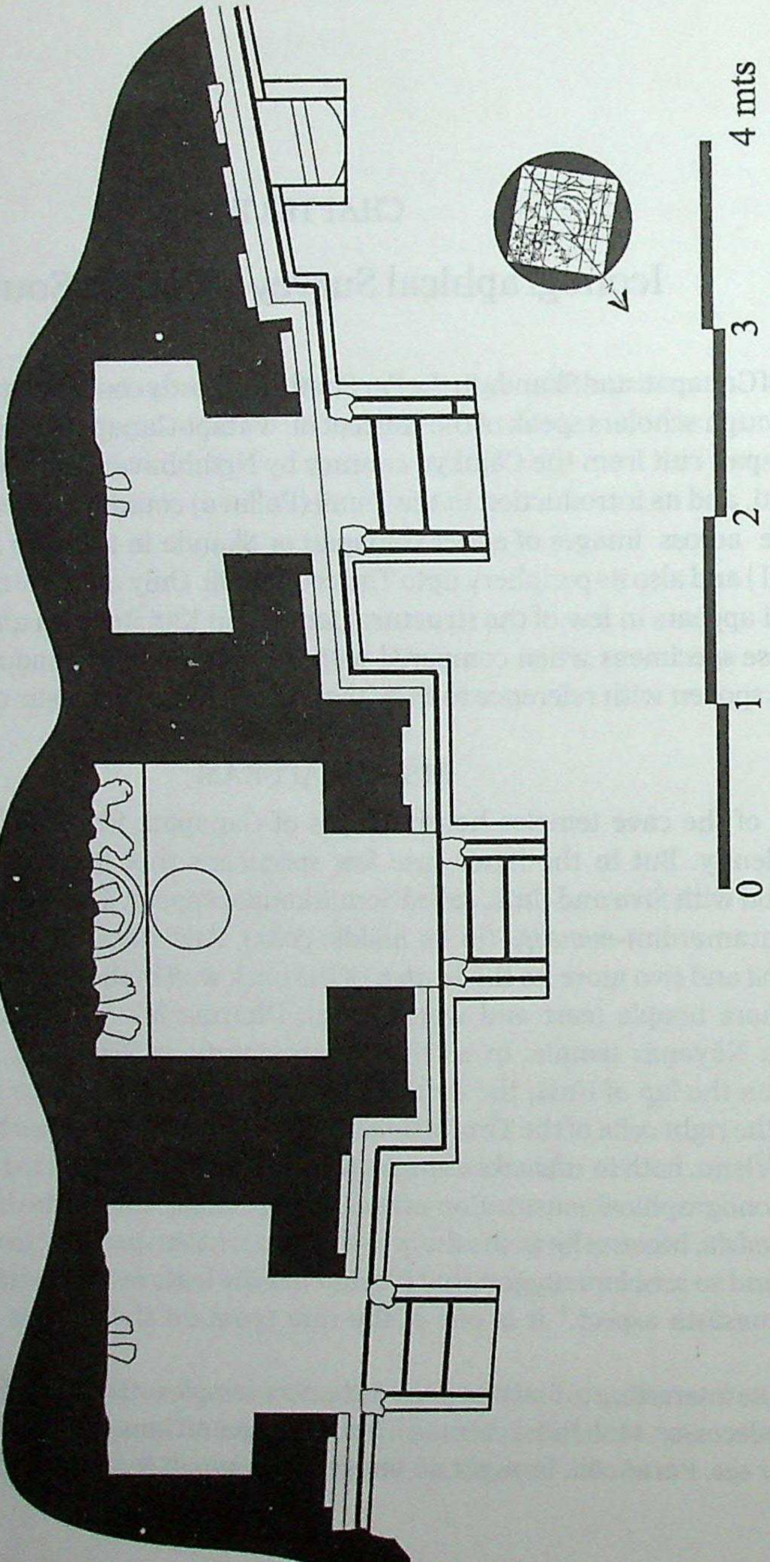
Iconographical Survey : The Far South

Images of Gaṇapati and Skanda in the Far South are mostly concentrated in the Pāṇḍināḍu area. Though scholars speak of the concept of 'Vātāpi-Gaṇapati' and the importation of the Gaṇapati cult from the Cāḷukya country by Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ I and his war general Parañcōti, and its introduction in the Tamil (Pallava) country, strangely enough we do not come across images of either Gaṇapati or Skanda in the core zone of Pallava art (Pl. VIII.1) and also its periphery upto Tiruccirāppaḷḷi. Only after the times of Rājasiṁha, Gaṇapati appears in few of the structural temples in Kāñcīpuram and Māmallapuram. Even these specimens when compared with those in the Pāṇḍinaḍu area are less conspicuous spoken with reference to their thematic input and stylistic output.

MĀMALLAPURAM

None of the cave temples house images of Gaṇapati. Skanda also fails to appear independently. But in the latter case few specimens (not less than half a dozen) in association with Śiva and Umā, called Somāskanda, appear. These are to be found in the Mahiṣāsuramardinī-*maṇḍapa* (in its middle cella), Atiraṇacaṇḍa-*maṇḍapa* (one in the *garbhāgṛha* and two more on the *koṣṭhas* of the back wall of the *maṇḍapa*), the two cellae of the Shore temple (east and west facing), Dharmarājā-*ratha* and the cella of the Mukunda Nāyaṉār temple. In all these representations Skanda is a child sportively dancing on the lap of Umā, the mother. Another noteworthy piece is that of Brahmā found in the right cella of the Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa*. The other two cellae being occupied by Śiva and Viṣṇu, both in *sthanaka* attitude, the third one is supposed to be that of Brahmā. But the iconographical constitution of Brahmā is peculiar, though he holds the *akṣamālā* and *kamanḍalū*, because he wears the *cannavīra*, an emblem peculiar to a warrior-god like Skanda, and so scholars suggest that it combines the features of Skanda and Brahmā in his Brahmasāsta aspect.[1] It is one of the rare types on the subject iconographically speaking.

It is quite interesting to find that none of the cave temples of the time of Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ I or his predecessor, Mahēndravarmaṉ I, house images of Gaṇapati. Had Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ or his *alter ego*, Parañcōti, brought an image[2] of Gaṇapati from Vātāpi (Badāmī), estab-



3. Plan, Trimūrti maṇḍapa, Māmallapuram

lished at Tirucceṅkāṭṭaṅkuṭi according to the myth, it is logical to think that few of them should have been carved in the cave temples excavated during the time of the hero at Māmallapuram. The total absence of any such imagery would guide us to the conclusion that something is wrong with the notion, Vātāpi-Gaṇapati (for details see Annexure).

Faint images, faint because most of them are miniatures, appear in the Shore temple, assigned to Rājasiṁha Pallava. Close to the Shore temple, recently archaeologists have unearthed a partly monolithic and partly structural temple in the shape of a Buddhist *caityagṛha*.[3] The temple houses Ṛṣabhavāhanamūrti in its cella. The *vimāna* section at its *śikhara* level, which is circular houses miniatures of seated Gaṇapati on four sides, facing the cardinal directions. They appear within *kūḍus*. All are seated alike with the thighs rested on a pedestal and the soles facing each other. The typology is *caturbhuja* and *iṭampuri*. Similar images of Gaṇapati are likely to have appeared in the various sections of the other structural temples in Māmallapuram of which we find few in the Shore temple.

VALLAM

Of all the cave temples of the Pallavas, Vallam is the only place wherein images of Gaṇapati appear. There are three caves of the cella type of which the first two on their right side at the *façade* level house images of Gaṇapati. The left side is occupied by Jyeṣṭhādevī. The type of alignment, linking Gaṇapati with Jyeṣṭhā, is to be found only at Vallam. We have noted cases of Gaṇapati linked with Mahiṣāsuramardinī (Udayagiri, Ellora and Badāmī), Skanda (Ellora) and Caṇḍikeśvara (Bhairavakoṇḍa) already. Vallam, adds a new element in respect of iconographic programme in cave temples. Of the two specimens available in Vallam, the image in Cave II appears to be a very late carving. Even in respect of Cave I scholars like K.R. Srinivasan[4] are of opinion that the images of Gaṇapati and Jyeṣṭhā were added later by the Pallavas themselves but not originals carved by founders of the caves.

Gaṇapati in Cave I is stylistically important, noted for its unique seated posture, not to be found in any other centre of early medieval art. The Lord is seated on a pedestal, leaning to his left as though resting on the left buttock. In order to balance the weight of the body, he has the left hand rested on a pillow. The belly is found protruding on the left lateral side. The right leg is slightly lifted and head tilted to the right. The Lord is *caturbhuja* and *valampuri*. He holds a flower (right) and *danta* (left) in *parahastas*. The front right hand is rested on the erect right thigh. The ornaments include a *vastra-yajñopavīta*, *kaṅkaṇas*, *keyūras* and *udarabandha*. The left tusk is missing and the right half-cut. The other image in Cave II is another unique piece (Pl. XVIII.2). The Lord is seated on a fully blossomed lotus. The seated posture is partly *utkuṭikāsana*. He is *dvibhuja*. The objects in hands are not legible. The proboscis is turned to the left and so *iṭampuri*. He wears a *karandamakuta*, *vastra-yajñopavīta* and other ornaments.

KAÑCĪPURAM

Most of the temples of Kāñcīpuram being of the post-Rājasiṁha phase, a number of images are found, especially Kailāsanātha and Iṟavātaneśvara. Kailāsanātha is the most important among them. Not less than a dozen pieces are found in it.

The Mahēndravarmeśvara square provides for Gaṇapati (Pl. XIX), fixed on the left side of the left side doorway and juxtaposed with Gajalakṣmī. The order is of particular interest because we have noted in Vallaṃ, the Lord being aligned with Jyeṣṭhādevī, supposed to be the elder sister of Lakṣmī.[5] In this illustration the Lord is *caturbhuja* and *iṭampuri*. He holds a flower and the bud of a flower in *parahastas*. The front left seems to have *modaka* as the proboscis is placed on it. The front right hand is in *kaṭakamudrā* attitude and perhaps held the *danta*. The Lord wears a *karaṇḍamakuṭa, vastra-yajñopavita, kaṅkaṇas* and *keyūras*. The seated posture is akin to *lalitāsana* as in the Ellora caves. Above the Lord's head a *catrāvali* is fitted, a novel idiom that we come across for the first time.

Another image appears in connection with Naṭarāja on the back wall of the *garbhagṛha*. The Lord is seated with soles of both the legs facing each other. He is *caturbhuja* and *iṭampuri*. The hands hold a fully blossomed flower and *danta* in the *parahastas*. Of the *pūrvahastas* one is in *kaṭakamudrā* and one rested on thigh. The Lord wears a *karaṇḍamakuṭa, vasta-yajñopavīta, kaṅkaṇas* and *keyūras*. The *chatrāvali* is present above the head. Besides two flying divinities, *vidyādharas*, are found holding one of their hands in *vismaya* attitude and the other a horn. The present image of Gaṇapati, attending on Naṭarāja, is the only one of its type in Tamil Nadu.

The image of Sapta Mātṛkas found on the right *devakulikas* (Pl. III.1) is subjoined by an image of Gaṇapati. In this case both Gaṇapati and Vīrabhadra appear side by side, the former being the first member of the group. Gaṇapati is seated in *sukhāsana* attitude, *caturbhuja* and *valampuri*. The objects in hands are not clear as they are covered by a later day plaster. He wears a *karaṇḍamakuṭa, vastra-yajñopavīta* and other ornaments.

Besides the major works, there are a number of miniatures, appearing at various locations of the temple, several of them atop the *devakuḷikas* within *kūḍu* motifs. Fourteen such miniatures are there. These are about 12" in height. Such small pieces appear on top of major iconographical illustrations such as Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Naṭarāja, Gaṅgādharamūrti, Ūrdhvatāṇḍava-Śiva and so on. Though not a novel idiom as it has already been noted in Māmallapuram and Elora (Cave XXI), the location of these miniatures adds a new dimension to Gaṇapati's place within the format of a Hindu temple and his cult value.

The Iṟavātaneśvara temple in its right *koṣṭha* of the wall section houses an image of Gaṇapati who is *caturbhuja* and seated. The *dvārapālakas* in the temple include miniatures of Gaṇapati, placed above their heads in a pattern that has been noticed in case of the Kailāsanātha temple.

Though images of Skanda are not to be found independently, Somāskanda is a very popular idiom in temples of Kāñcīpuram. Almost all temples house Somāskandamūrti behind the Liṅga in their cellae. The temples are Kailāsanātha, Vālīśvara, Airāvateśvara, Mātaṅgeśvara, Mukteśvara, Iṟavātaneśvara and Piṟavātaneśvara. In the Kailāsa alone nearly two dozens specimens are to be found as they redundantly appear in most of the *devakuḷikas*. Kāñcīpuram is the only place in Indian artistic tradition wherein we come across such a cavalcade of Somāskanda images. In all these specimen Skanda uniformly appears as a child in association with Umā. He is *dvibhuja* and carries nothing. Often he stands on the lap of Devī in a dancing attitude.

TIRUCCIRĀPPAḶḶI

From Kāñcīpuram and Māmallapuram in northern Tamil Nadu, we pass on to Tirucirāppaḷḷi the heart of the Kāviri delta to trace another image of Gaṇapati. Though there are not less than fifty cave and structural temples in the inter-lying region none is important for a study of Gaṇapati or Skanda imagery.

The lower cave in Tirucirāppaḷḷi on the right extremity houses a *sthānaka* Gaṇapati (Pl. XX). About 5' tall, it is the only *sthānaka* image whose proportion has been designed on a macro scale. All others of the type from the Deccan are insignificant when compared with the masterpiece. The Lord stands in *samapāda* attitude with the legs placed at ease. The proboscis hangs straight below with the tip of the organ turning to the left, which makes it *iṭampuri*. The Lord is *caturbhuja*, holding a *danta* and flower in the *parahastas*. Objects in *pūrvahastas* are not legible. The right rests on the head of a dwarf, standing below. The left seems to hold the *akṣamālā*, rested on the shoulder of another dwarf. The ornaments include a jewelled *karaṇḍamakuṭa*, big necklace, *vastra-yajñopavīta*, *udarabandha*, *kaṅkaṇas*, *keyūras* and a loin cloth.

The fixation of the image at the north-west corner of the cave is of particular interest. Totally five images appear on the back wall, they being Gaṇapati, *Sthānaka*-Śiva, *Sthānaka*-Brahmā, *Sthānaka*-Sūryanārāyaṇa and Durgā or Mahiṣāsuramardinī.[6] The middle three figures constitute the Trimūrtis of the Hindu pantheon. The two cellae of the lower cave are dedicated to Viṣṇu (west facing) and Śiva-Liṅga (east facing). The *koṣṭha* meant for Brahmā itself is deemed to be a cella for Brahmā. There is a triangular arrangement of the cave in which Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva are important. The two additional members appear in a pattern that we have found Gaṇapati-Mahiṣāsuramardinī in the cave temples of Udayagiri, Ellora, Badāmī and Moghulrājapuram. Instead of placing them outside at the *façade* level, both have been accommodated within the format of the cave, adding a new dimension to their imagery. In the alignment what is of particular interest is that Gaṇapati gets closer to Śiva and Devī, in the latter case Skanda is like that (e.g., Somāskandamūrti in the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam region - cf. the same in Ellora Cave XVI). The Tirucirāppaḷḷi lower cave is the third in importance, the other two being Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam and Tirumalaipuram in deep south, wherein Gaṇapati gets a place within the womb part of a cave. In all other cases (e.g., Kuṭumiyāmalai, Makipālaṉpaṭṭi, Ariṭṭapāṭṭi and so on), Gaṇapati is just outside the cave as a guardian deity (*gaṇa*). It is to point out the increasing cult value that Gaṇapati was gaining within the Hindu pantheon of the Tamil country. Gaṇapati appearing on the right side (cf. Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi *infra*) is in tune with the pan-Indian tradition that has been noted in connection with Udayagiri and Ellora.

TIRUVEḶḶARAI

The cave temple of the late Pallava period is incomplete and provides for two cellae on lateral sides. There is an image of seated Gaṇapati (Pl. XXI). He is *caturbhuja* and *iṭampuri*. The back right hand holds a *danta*. The front hands are rested on erect knee and thigh. The Lord is seated at east with the right knee erect and the left laid on pedestal.

PUTUKKŌṬṬAI CIRCLE

Half a dozen of the cave temples in the Putukkōṭṭai region include images of Gaṇapati. Excepting Tirukōkarṇam and Malaiyakkōyil wherein the images appear within the cave, in all other places like Kuṭumiyāmalai, Tirukkōlakkuṭi and Makipālaṉpaṭṭi, Gaṇapati is carved as *bas relief* on the right side of the main cave. In Malaiyaṭippaṭṭi and Tirukōkaraṇam, Gaṇapati forms part of the Sapta Mātṛkas.

The Kuṭumiyāmalai cave (Pl. VI.1) is bereft of iconographical illustrations. But for the Liṅga and the *dvārapālakas* and a small Gaṇapati (Pl. XXV). On the right side of the cave, there is a bas relief of Gaṇapati (Pl. XXIV) on the slopes of the rock. Nearby we find the famous musical inscription. The Lord in the carving is seated in *lalitāsana* with the left leg placed horizontally on the pedestal and the right erect. The Lord is *caturbhuja* and *valampuri*. The proboscis is erect and suspended below with the tip of the organ alone turning to the right. The front right hand holds the *modaka* and rested on the knee of the right leg. The front left hand is rested on thigh. The back right is just lifted above with open figures and seems to hold the *akṣamālā*. The back left hand holds a spear-like object, may be the bud of a flower.[7] The Lord wears a *karaṇḍamakuṭa*, *vastra-yajñopavīta*, *keyūras*, *kaṅkaṇas* and *udarabandha*. The right tusk is broken and ears winnow-like. The image is life size.

Gaṇapati in the Makipālaṉpaṭṭi cave temple is seated and *valampuri*. The image is life size and the Lord endowed with *caturbhujas*. The back two hands hold a bunch of crops and *danta*. The front left hand is placed on thigh and the right touching the *uttarīya*. The Lord wears the usual ornaments.

The Tirukōkarṇam cave temple assigns a place for Gaṇapati (Pl. XXIII.2) within the *maṇḍapa* as in Tirucci and Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam. The right wall of the cave (about 6' in height) is full of the presence of Gaṇapati. On the opposite left wall Gaṅgādhara appears. Gaṇapati is seated in *ardhapadmāsana*. He is *caturbhuja* and holds the following in hands: flowers in *parahastas*, *aṅkuśa* and placed on thigh with *modaka*. The Lord wears the usual ornaments and is *iṭampuri*. The panel of Sapta Mātṛkas carved on a rocky projection to the right side of the cave includes a miniature (2' height) of Gaṇapati. The Lord is seated in *lalitāsana, caturbhuja* and *iṭampuri*. He holds the following in hands: a creeper, *modaka, danta* and one rested on thigh. The location of Gaṇapati in the Tirukōkarṇam cave temple is of particular interest. He is aligned with Gaṅgādhara in an equal status as Skanda in the Ellora caves. Gaṇapati in the Kuṉṟāṇṭārkōyil cave (Pl. II.1, Pl. XXIII.1) is an interesting image.

The Tirukkōlakkuṭi cave temple is archaic in pattern, comparable to the Pirāṉmalai cave, which falls within the region at a distance of 30 km's. The main cave is not important for any iconographical illustration but for images of *dvārapālakas* who are *ṛṣis*. To the right side of the cave as at Kuḍumiyāmalai there is a *bas relief* of Gaṇapati. A life size image, it is seated and *caturbhuja*.

Malaiyakkōyil is close to Tirumeyyam on the way to Poṉṉamarāvati. There are two caves of which one facing the south houses an image of Gaṇapati (Pl. XXII) in its wall. The Lord is seated, *caturbhuja* and *valampuri*. The two back hands hold *pāśa* and *ṭaṅka*. It is interesting to note that earlier scholars have identified the author of the cave with Mahēndravarmaṉ (the local inscription refers to Maheśvara) which idea is disputed. In case Mahēndravarmaṉ was author of the cave how come Gaṇapati here (cf. Vātāpi Gaṇapati concept).

The Vāgīśvara cave temple at Malaiyaṭippaṭṭi includes an image of Gaṇapati in its panel of Sapta Mātṛkas. The Lord is seated in *lalitāsana* attitude. He is *caturbhuja* and *valampuri*. The front right hand holds the *modaka* and left rested on thigh. The back right hand seems to hold the *akṣamālā* and the right in *kaṭakamudrā*. The Lord wears a *karaṇḍamakuṭa, kaṅkaṇas, keyūras, udarabandha* and other ornaments. The image is a miniature, about 2' in height.

Kuṉṉakkuṭi and Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi are two neigbouring places, lying on the peripheral limits, separating Putukkōṭṭai and Maturai. At Kuṉṉakkuṭi in Cave I an image of Skanda is found.[8] The Lord stands in *samapāda* attitude. He is *caturbhuja*. The front right hand is suspended below in *varada* attitude. The front left is *ūruhasta*. The *parahastas* are lifted above in *kaṭakamudrā* attitude and hold illegible objects. The Lord wears a tiara in floral pattern, *vastra-yajñopavīta, kaṅkaṇas* and other ornaments. The facial expression is *saumya* as found in the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam south cave (*infra*).

Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi 'hamlet of Piḷḷaiyār' (Tamil word for Gaṇapati) is very close to Kuṉṉakkuṭi. The cave temple here houses an image of *dvibhuja* Gaṇapati, the only one of its type in Tamil Nadu. The local inscription (datable to the 5th century A.D.) calls the Lord Deśivināyakar.[9] The Lord is seated in *padmāsana* attitude. The proboscis is turned to the right and so *valampuri*. The Lord holds the *modaka* in right and *danta* in left hands. The left tusk is half cut. The lord wears the usual ornaments, including the *karaṇḍamakuta* and *udarabandha*. The ears are not as broad though winnow-like.

Stylistically speaking, the Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi Gaṇapati is in archaic form. The *dvibhuja* aspect as noted in case of the Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji specimens in Karṇāṭaka is typical of the image. Depending on the palaeographical nature of the local inscription, it may be dated back to the 5th century A.D. The name Deśivināyakar is of special importance. *Deśi* as opposed to *videśi* 'foreign' or 'alien' makes it known that the Gaṇapati of Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi is a god of local origin. The name is strikingly in contrast with the epithet, 'Vatāpi-Gaṇapati', which offers scope for the thesis that Gaṇapati like Tamil Marukaṉ could have been a God of the land who mixed with the North Indian Gaṇapati by about the 5th century A.D. In this connection, the view aired by M. Arunachalam and N. Subrahmanian (*supra* Chap. I) deserve due consideration. At the point we may also keep in mind rare motifs of *gaṇas* with elephantine heads amidst a cavalcade of such figures in Indian art, the earliest traced to the Amarāvati *stūpa* in Āndhradeśa (Pl. XXXIV.2).[10] There are several such beings of *bhutagaṇas* at the *prastara* part of the early Cōḻa (9th century of A.D.) temples, e.g. at Tiraviyalūr.[11]

MATURAI CIRCLE

The core zone of Pāṇḍya art in the Madurai country is a good field for a better impression of Gaṇapati and Skanda imagery. Tirupparaṅkuṉṟan, Vīraśikhāmaṇi and Tirumalaipuram are the important centres. Āṉaimalai (Pl. I) is of special importance because an image of Skanda, attended by his wife, appears in the *garbhagṛha* (Pl. II.2). Similarly, the core part of the Tiruccentūr Murukaṉ temple is also supposed to be a cave of the early Pāṇḍyan period though much of the other structures are of later origin.

Of the various centres of early medieval art in South India, Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam is unique in several respects. The north group of caves consist of the core cave, expanding in a macrocosmic pattern with the addition of three more cellae for different aspects of Devī.[12]

The core cave consists of three *cellae*, enshrining images of Vaikuṇṭhamūrti-Viṣṇu (west facing), Liṅga-Somāskanda (east facing) and Mahiṣāsuramardinī- standing on buffalo head (north facing). The *garbhagṛha* for Mahiṣāsuramardinī is flanked by images of Skanda (right) and Gaṇapati (left), appearing on separate niches. Earlier C. Sivaramamurti has generalised that there are five *garbhagṛhas*.[13] In fact it is not so. There are only three, the two meant for Gaṇapati and Skanda being *koṣṭhas*. Here both the sons attended on their heroic Mother who had slaughtered the buffalo-demon. It is in agreement with the shrine for Mahiṣāsuramardinī in Cave I of Badāmī. The pattern of alignment is also markedly akin, Gaṇapati to the left and Skanda to the right. What is unique in Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam is the tricellar pattern and the rare elements that Gaṇapati and Skanda include. Both are attended by a number of minor divinities, which simply is marvellous within the range of early medieval art and take the plastic norms to the pattern of portrayal in the Elephanta caves.

Gaṇapati, attending on Mahiṣāsuramardinī, is seated on a *padmapīṭha*. A colossal piece, it measures about 7' in height. The Lord is *caturbhuja* and *iṭampuri*. He has a sugarcane, rested on his shoulder horizontally, holding the root and sprout in the *parahastas*. The front right hand holds the *modaka* and the left is rested on thigh. The Lord is attended by *gandharvas* above and *gaṇas* below. The sugarcane is a novel idiom, not to be found in any other image. By virtue of the fact, the Lord is called Kalpaka-Vināyakar, one who promises all those desired by devotees (Rajarajan 2001).

From the core tricellar cave, the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam ţemple goes on expanding in the macrocosmic pattern. There are three cellae for Gajalakṣmī, Bhuvaneśvarī and Jyeṣṭhādevī. These are found at a lower altitude, the first and third to the right and second left side of the main cave. Still at a lower level there are two *bas reliefs*, called Aṇḍābharaṇar and Aghoramūrti. They appear like *dvārapālakas*. Close to Aṇḍābharaṇar,[14] there is a small niche in which a miniature of Gaṇapati appears. He is *caturbhuja* and holds the *pāśa* in one of the hands. He is in dancing mode and the only evidence of *Nāṭya*-Gaṇapati in the Far South. Stylistically, the imagery is of a lower order and may be a later addition.

Murukaṉ (Skanda) appearing on the right *koṣṭha* is an unique iconographical specimen. The Lord is seated in the company of his wife, may be Devasena. Murukaṉ is *caturbhuja*, holding the *vajra* and *śakti* in *parahastas*. The *pūrvahastas* are in *abhaya* and *varadamudrās*. Murukaṉ is seated in *sukhāsana* attitude with the right leg suspended below and placed on a *padmapīṭha*. Devasenā is seated to left. According to the local tradition, Murukaṉ, the warrior-God, was wedded to Indra's daughter, Devasenā, at Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam. The clue to the identification of a female figure with Indra's daughter is offered by the vehicle of Indra, the Airāvata (an elephant), appearing on the *bhadrapīṭha* upon which both are seated. It is interesting to note that the classical Tamil texts (*vide*, Chap. I) speak of an elephant, called Piṇimukam, as the vehicle of Murukaṉ. Besides zoomorphic representations of a cock, goat and peacock, all associated with Murukaṉ (*vide*, Chap. I) appear along with the elephant. The gods and goddesses attending on Murukaṉ are Sūrya, Candra, Gāyatrī, Sāvitrī, Brahmā and Indra. Brahmā is supposed to have officiated the marriage while Indra gave his daughter in *kaṉṉikādāna*. Skanda appears all alone in the art of the Deccan. It is only in Tamil Nadu that the Lord appears in the company of his wives. Good examples are the cave temples of Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam and Āṉaimalai. It is likely that in the Tirumalai cave temple also Murukaṉ appears with his Devī in the *garbhagṛha*[15] though others argue otherwise.[16]

The east facing cella, meant for Śiva, houses the Liṅga and a bas-relief of Somāskanda on its back wall. It is the only instance of Somāskanda in the Paṇḍyan caves which by and large is an idiom confined to Māmallapuram and Kāñcīpuram. Strangely enough in cave and structural temples of the Pāṇḍyas, Somāskanda fails to appear as a rule. Of the 50 and odd Pāṇḍyan caves, Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam-north is the sole example of one of the classical impressions on the subject. In the representation, Skanda appears as a child in the usual

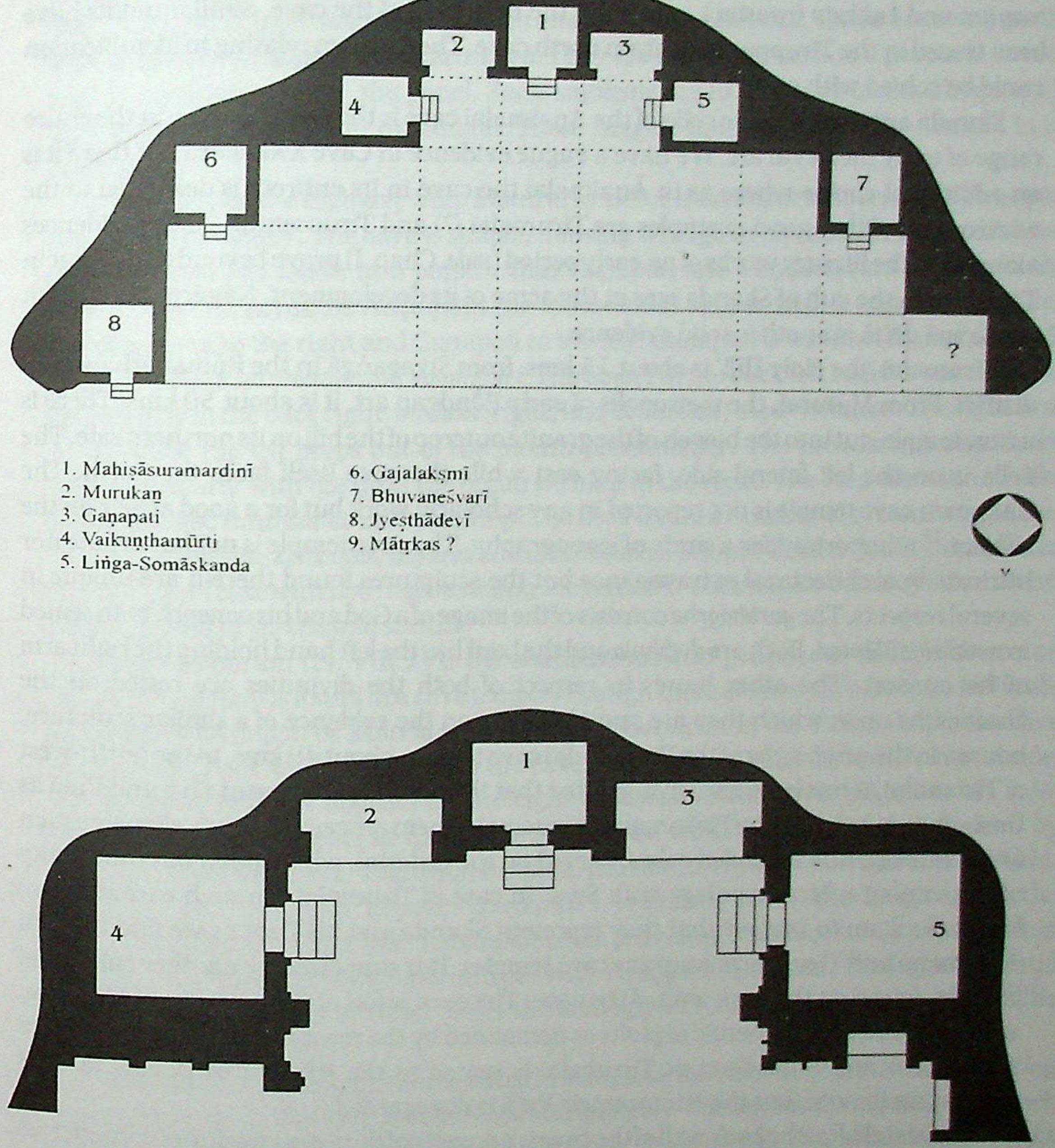
Pallava pattern but seated on Devī's lap, *dvibhuja* and holds the bud of a flower in the right hand. Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, Paṭṭadakkal and Ellora are scattered but important centres of Somāskanda in art. The idiom is sure to have radiated upto western India and the deep south from Māmallapuram (Mahiṣāsuramardinī-*maṇḍapa*) and Cāluvaṉkuppam (Atiranacaṇḍa-*maṇḍapa*).

The south cave at Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, called Umaiāṇṭavar, on its back wall houses an image of Naṭarāja, which is mutilated. Adjoining the piece on the left side, there is a carving of a *dvibhuja* God, attended by two of his wives. It is Murukaṉ (Pl. XXXI.2) who is flanked by his wives, Vaḷḷi and Devasenā. All three are standing and *dvibhuja*. They wear tall *kirīṭamakuṭas* and the other ornaments. The image of Naṭarāja is carved within a stone *prabhāvali*. A top, on both sides there are two niches of Pañcamukha (or Heramba) (Pl. XXVI.1) Gaṇapati (right) and a four-faced (supposed to be six, Ṣaṇmukha or T. Āṟumukaṉ) God, mounted on a peacock vehicle, appear the five-faced Gaṇapati is surrounded by half a dozen miniatures of Gaṇapati (about 6" in height) images while the major carving itself is about 2.5' in height.

Skanda appearing on *mayūra* as Mayūravāhana is a popular motif that appears profusely in the art of Lower Deccan. In most cases they are miniatures of the type found at Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam. He may be admitted within the pantheon of gods known to the early medieval art. Pañcamukha-Gaṇapati is a far fetched idea that makes its appearance only in the later medieval art of South India. There is some problem in accepting the piece as of the early Pāṇḍya period.

The rocky space outside the Umaiāṇṭavar cave on both sides provides for some stray carvings. On the right side, there is an image of Gaṇapati (Pl. XXVI.2). Gaṇapati is seated on a pedestal in *lalitāsana* attitude. He is *caturbhuja* and holds the *ṭaṅka* in back right hand. The emblem in back left hand appears to be a snake. The front two hands and proboscis are broken. The face looks oval and more like a human face. The winnow-like ears prove the elephantine nature of the God.

Ānaimalai is an important centre in the Maturai country, noted for the two cave temples; one dedicated to Yoga Nṛsiṁha and the other to Skanda. A simple cave temple in the Mahēndravarmaṉ pattern, the antechamber houses an image of Skanda and his consort, perhaps Devasenā, seated on a *bhadrāsana* in *sukhāsana* attitude. Both are *dvibhuja* and contrast with the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam north and compare with the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam south images of the type. Skanda wears a cap-like headgear in the typical Pallava model (cf. Gajalakṣmī in Varāha-*maṇḍapa*), again found in case of Jyeṣṭhadevī in the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam north group of caves. The Lord wears a big necklace, a *cannavīra* and a long flowing loin cloth. The right hand is in *abhayamudrā* and the left rested on thigh. Devī is seated to the left and wears an ornate headgear, *kuccabandha*, long flowing loin cloth (*muṇḍu*) and other ornaments. She has the hands arranged in the same pattern as of her spouse. Excepting the *cannavīra* there is nothing in the images to



1. Mahiṣāsuramardinī
2. Murukaṉ
3. Gaṇapati
4. Vaikuṇṭhamūrti
5. Liṅga-Somāskanda
6. Gajalakṣmī
7. Bhuvaneśvarī
8. Jyeṣṭhādevī
9. Mātṛkas ?

Plans not to scale

Detail of 1, 2, 3.

4. Plan: Pyramidal pattern, Tirupparaṅkunram North caves

prove their identity with Skanda and his consort. The problem is solved by the motifs of *mayūra* and *kukkuṭa* (rooster), carved on the back wall of the cave. Similar motifs have been traced in the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam north cave. The problem relating to identification could be solved with ease.

Skanda appearing in the cella of the Āṉaimalai cave is the one of its type in the entire range of early medieval art. We have a vague evidence in Cave XXI Ellora but there it is an additional shrine where as in Āṉaimalai the cave in its entirety is dedicated to the warrior-god. Other good examples are Tirumalai (?) and Tiruccentūr. These evidences along with the literary works of an early period (*vide*, Chap. I) prove beyond doubt that in Tamil Nadu the cult of Skanda was at the acme of its development. Nāgārjuṇakoṇḍa in the Kṛṣṇā deltā is another solid evidence.

Tirumalai 'the Holy Hill' is about 15 kms. from Śivagaṅgā in the Rāmanāthapuram district. From Maturai, the metropolis of early Pāṇḍyan art, it is about 50 kms. There is a cave temple, cut into the bowels of the granite outcrop of the hill on its northern side. The cella is on the left lateral side, facing east while the cave itself faces the north. The unknown cave temple is not reported in any scholarly work but for a good article on the subject,[17] is important for a study of iconography. The cave temple is neither ornate nor intricate in architectural extravagance but the sculptures found therein are unique in several respects. The *garbhagṛha* consists of the image of a God and his consort, both seated in *mahārājalīlāsana*. Both are *dvibhuja* and the Lord has the left hand holding the right arm of his consort. The other hands in respect of both the divinities are rested on the *bhadrapīṭha* upon which they are seated. Basing on the evidence of a similar sculpture, housed in the *garbhagṛha* of the Pirāṉmalai cave temple, about 40 kms, to the north-west of Tirumalai, it has been earlier suggested that the divinities represent Śiva and Umā as Umāsahitamūrti.[18] In the Pirāṉmalai cave temple, there are certain subtle elements such as an antelope and a hooded cobra, carved on the pedestal, which point out the affinity of the iconographical typology with Śiva. In case of Tirumalai, no such earmarks are found. So, I am to suggest that they represent Skanda and his Devī as we find them in Āṉaimalai and Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam cave temples. It is supported by another carving of Skanda, found on the back wall of the cave. The cave is full of the presence of Murukaṉ who gets ready for his heroic exploits as demanded by the reason of his incarnation as a son of Śiva and Umā. Devī at Tirumalai is seated to the left and so Devasenā. It is interesting to note that the ethnocentric Vaḷḷi is disregarded.

The *bas relief* on the back wall of the cave is a novelty of the age as we do not come across any such representation in any other cave temple during the period under study. A pretty large panel (6' x 9'), it represents Skanda or Kārttikeya in *sthānaka* attitude. He is *dvibhuja* and holds no weapons. He wears a *karaṇḍamakuṭa, uttarīya, makarakuṇḍalas, kaṅkaṇas, keyūras,* necklaces and so on. The *cannavīra* (cf. Āṉaimalai) is missing. Vīrabhahu, Kārttikeya's assistant in war-like moves, is found standing to the right who holds his hands fastened to the body, ready to carry out the assignments, offered by the warrior-God. The Lord's right hand is in *ūruhasta* and the left in *kaṭihasta*. There are some motifs which identify the image with Kārttikeya. They are a cock, a ram and a peacock, carved within the framework of the panel. Such emblems are to be found in the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam (north cave) and Āṉaimalai. These suggest that the cave is for Skanda in its dedication.

Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi on the highway from Maturai to Mēlūr is an important centre of Gaṇapati (Pl. XXVIII) imagery. The cave is simple, housing a Liṅga in its cella. At the *façade* level there are two bas reliefs in a pattern that Gaṇapati and Caṇḍikeśvara appear in the Bhairavakoṇḍa caves. At Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi the same deities appear with a small change, i.e., Caṇḍikeśvara to the right and Gaṇapati to the left. Gaṇapati is a robust figure, about 5' in height. He is *caturbhuja* and *valampuri*. The object in the back left hand is not clear. He holds a *pāśa* in the back right, *modaka* (right) and *danta* (left) in *pūrvahastas*. The right tusk is cut while the left peeps out of the mouth prominently. The proboscis is sent down perpendicularly with the tip of the organ turning to the right. The ears are winnow-like and a jewelled *karaṇḍamakuṭa* fitted atop. The Lord wears a number of ornaments such as *vastra-yajñopavīta, kaṅkaṇas, keyūras* and *udarabandha*. The pot-bellied God is found seated in a posture of ease with both legs rested on the pedestal. The image is cut deep into a niche, adding a kind of *garbhagṛha* status.

Tirumalaipuram (Pl. VIII.2) is the southern-most in peninsular India wherein an image of Gaṇapati is found in a cave temple. Though there are few cave temples in Kerala no image of Gaṇapati or Skanda is forthcoming. Gaṇapati in the Tirumalaipuram cave occupies the back wall. The Liṅga in the cave is housed in a cella on the left lateral side. An image of Brahmā appears on the right side wall of the cave, placed in an axial alignment. Viṣṇu appears in the centre of the back wall, thus a triangle is formed by linking Liṅga-Mahādeva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā, the Hindu Trinity. On either side of Viṣṇu, Naṭarāja and Gaṇapati appear. Gaṇapati's proximity with the Liṅga as in the Tiruccirāppaḷḷi cave is notable. Tirumalaipuram providing the space for Gaṇapati within the roof of the cave temple, stands on a par with Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, Tirukōkarṇam and Tiruccirāppaḷḷi while in all other places the Lord appears outside the cave, carved on the granite hill in bold relief.

Gaṇapati in Tirumalaipuram is seated in *lalitāsana*, the right knee erect and the left leg rested on the seat. The Lord is *caturbhuja* and *iṭampuri*. The left tusk is missing. The back two hands bear the *danta* (right) and *puṣtaka* (left). The front right hand holds the *modaka* and is rested on the erect knee. The front left hand is formed into a fist. The Lord wears a *karaṇḍamakuṭa, kaṅkaṇas, keyūras* and *udarabandha*.

At Vīraśikhamaṇi, close to Tirumalaipuram, there is an image of Gaṇapati at the *façade* level of the cave temple. The image is of the usual seated type, which is defaced. Gaṇapati appears on the right side while the left corresponding niche houses an impression of Śiva in his terrific aspect. It could be an equal of Caṇḍikeśvara that we have already noted in the cave temples of Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi and Bhairavakoṇḍa.

The Veṭṭuvāṉkōyil at Kaḻukumalai is a milestone in the architectural and iconographical catalogue of the age. Its carved *vimāna* is the abode of iconographical masterpieces on subjects relating to Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Skanda. There is a seated image of Skanda in *sukhāsana* aspect. He is *caturbhuja* and holds the *śakti* and *akṣamālā* in *parahastas*. The *pūrvahastas* are rested on thigh. The Lord is profusely decorated with a number of ornaments like *karaṇḍamakuṭa, hārās, kaṭibandha, keyūras* and a *cannavīra* made of Pāṇḍyan pearls. The Lord holding the *akṣamālā* of special importance and may point out his Brahmasāsta aspect as appearing in the Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa* at Māmallapuram.

CONSOLIDATION

In marked contrast to the traditions in both the Upper and Lower Deccan, images of Skanda appear in huge numbers when compared with Gaṇapati. In both cases, miniatures (e.g., Gaṇapati in the Kailāsa of Kāñcīpuram, Skanda as a member of Somāskanda) dominate and the picture is balanced. Kāñcīpuram is the base of the miniature-art. Qualitatively speaking, the Putukkōṭṭai and Maturai regions are prolific in Gaṇapati imagery. Maturai is the home of Skanda as he is found housed in *garbhagṛha*. Chronologically speaking, Maturai comes first with the archaic impression of an icon at Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi. The region south of the river Kāviri was the catchment zone of Gaṇapati in art. In case of Skanda, Maturai dominates the list. It is interesting to note that not even a single image of Skanda appears independently in Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam and the Kāviri basin.

Though C. Sivaramamurti was of opinion that the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam *koṣṭha* meant for Gaṇapati is a cella, no other evidence of the elephantine God housed in *garbhagṛha* is to be found in Tamil Nadu. On the other hand, Skanda finds a place in not less than three temples as placed in the *garbhagṛha*. It along with reference to the *kōṭṭam* 'temple' of Murukaṉ in ancient Tamil literature (*supra*, Chap. I) would prove the popularity of the cult of Skanda in Tamil Nadu. After the palmy days of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, the cult of Skanda finds a secure place in South Indian society in the Pāṇḍya country. Though Gaṇapati imagery in the Pāṇḍya country was in a better position, as a cult object he seems not to have acquired a definitive place.

Gaṇapati is mostly seated and the only evidence of *sthānaka* image at Tiruccirāppaḷḷi is a classical impression of the period. That along with the *Pañcamukha*-Gaṇapati of Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam (south cave) stands proof of the developments in iconography at a rapid speed in Tamil Nadu. Similarly, Skanda appears both seated and standing. The seated types predominate in marked contrast to the Deccani tradition. Another important point is that Skanda appears with Devīs (e.g., Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam south cave). Emblems typical of Skanda such as the cock, peacock, elephant and ram make an entry into the iconographical constitution. In the Deccan, mostly the peacock appears (e.g. Caves XV and XII of Ellora) in addition to the ram (Cave XXI Ellora).

Iconographically speaking, Gaṇapati is uniformly *caturbhuja*, seated and *valampuri*. The images in Vallam Cave I, Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi, Tirumalaipuram, Tiruccirāppaḷḷi, Kuṭumiyāmalai and Tirupprańkuṉṟam (two specimens) are remarkable works. The Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi piece in *dvibhuja* aspect and datable to the end of the 5th century A.D. stands as a starting point in the history of Gaṇapati cult and iconography in Tamil Nadu. Several types of Gaṇapati appear. There are independent carvings, mostly as *bas reliefs* on a side of the cave, Gaṇapati in relation to Caṇḍikeśvara and the Sapta Mātṛkas. He is also associated with Śaivite forms such as Naṭarāja, and Dakṣiṇāmūrti but in all these cases he does not form part of a panel as in the Deccan but appears in separate niches, usually within *kūḍus* but definitely oriented towards the major manifestation of Śiva. It would point out the secondary role of the God in the pantheon as a *gaṇa*.

Skanda is mostly *dvibhuja*. He is endowed with four hands in the Tirupparańkuṉṟam (north) cave temple. It shows the development of the form. Comparatively speaking, Skanda is better placed in the iconographic tradition of the Tamil country. Though the independent images are few in number, they represent a sophisticated tradition from the point of view of both myth and iconography. Another novelty of the Tamil tradition is Skanda's orientation with Śiva and Umā, called Somāskanda. Though mostly concentrated in Kāñcīpuram and Māmallapuram, it radiated its influence both within and outside Tamil Nadu. The southern-most outpost of the cult could be Maturai and the northern imprints found at Paṭṭadakkal and Ellora. Tamil Nadu had something to contribute towards the pan-Indian art traditions through a unique form, combining Śiva, Umā and Skanda.

The statistical data shows the fact that it was in the Pāṇḍya country that Gaṇapati and Skanda cults were deep rooted. Gaṇapati cult takes its origin here and the finest *bas reliefs* on the subject are in the Puṭukkōṭṭai-Maturai circles. The popular notion (*vide*, Annexure I), Vātāpi-Gaṇapati, is both a misnomer and an anachronism.

REFERENCES

1. K.R. Srinivasan, *Temples of South India*, p. 99.
2. A local belief among the Tamils conforms to the kind of abduction of an image of Gaṇapati. The Tamils strongly believe that to erect a temple for Gaṇapati and install in it a stolen image is very auspicious and more effective.
3. The temple is basically circular in form and monolithc upto the *prastara* level. The superstructure seems to have been fitted on the basement.
4. K.R. Srinivasan, *Cave Temples of the Pallavas*, p. 134.
5. *Jyeṣṭhā* means 'elder' or 'senior' and so Jyesṭhādevī is supposed to be the elder sister of Lakṣmī in Tamil tradition. She is also believed to be the Goddess of illuck and so called Mūtēvi, *mū* actualy stands for *mūtta* 'senior' or 'elder'.
6. Cf. R.K.K. Rajarajan, Sugarcane Gaṇapati, *East and West*, 51: 3-4, 2001, pp. 379-84.

TABLE III
DISTRIBUTION OF ICONOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES: FAR SOUTH

GAṆAPATI

Iconographical variables	Distribution pattern - placewise						
	Mam.	Val.	Kan.	Tiru.	PC	MC	Total
Independent	4	2	2	1	6	5	20
Nāṭya Gaṇapati	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Pañcamukha-Gaṇapati	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
p/o Mātṛkas	-	-	1	-	2	-	3
p/o Naṭarāja	-	-	1	-	-		1
p/o Śaivite forms	-	-	14	-	-	-	14
p/o *kūḍu* motifs	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
Total	8	2	18	1	8	7	44

SKANDA

Iconographical variables	Distribution pattern - placewise						
	Mam.	Val.	Kan.	Tiru.	P.C.	M.C.	Total
Independent	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Housed in cella	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
With Devīs		-	-	-	-	4	4
Mayūravāhana	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Somāskanda	6	-	30	-	-	1	37
Total	6	-	30	-	1	9	47

Abbreviations

Mam.-	Māmallapuram
Val. -	Vallam
Kan. -	Kāñcīpuram
Tiru. -	Tiruccirāppaḷḷi,
PC -	Putukkōṭṭai Circle
MC -	Maturai Circle
p/o -	part of

7. The right being endowed with *akṣamālā*, the left is likely to hold the *kamaṇḍalū* to symbolise the Lord's yogic aspect. The object looks like a spade, which weapon is endowed by masions in Tamil Nadu to images of Gaṇapati that they worship.
8. R. Nagaswamy, Some Contributions of the Pāṇḍya to South Indian Art, *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XXVII, 1964, p. 273.
9. *Idem.*
   The epithet is of particular interest because *deśi* 'native' as opposed to *videśi* 'foreign' would mean the type of Gaṇapati might refer to a God of local origin. The *Cilappatikaram* (3:12,29-30, 46),contemporaneous with the inscription, refers to two types of *kūttu* 'dance (drama)' of which one was *tēcikam* (Skt. *deśika* which is a reference to the autochthonous dance-drama type). If so, Deśivināyakar is likely to refer to a God of local origin who was like Gaṇapati (cf. M. Arunachalam and N. Subrahmanian *supra*) and later merged with the pan-Indian God of the type.
10. N. Venkataramana Reddy, *Gaṇeśa in Art and Epigraphy in Andhra Pradesh* (Ph. D. Thesis, Sri Venkateswara Unversity), Tirupati 1995, p. 8, Fig. 1.
11. K. Sivaramalingam, *The Śivayoganāthasvāmi Temple at Tiruviyalūr* (Ph. D. Thesis, University of Madras), Madras 1994, Chap. III.
12. R.K.K. Rajarajan, Further Light on the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam Caves, *Annlai* AION, 51:4, 1991, pp. 395-408. The author has traced the various stages in the evolution of the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam caves, pointing out the uniqueness of the caves with reference to the impact of Tantric ideas.
13. C. Sivaramamurti, *Kaḻugumalai and Early Pāṇḍyan Rockcut Shrines*, p.32.
14. Cf. The *kuṁbhāṇḍa* figures in early Buddhist sculpture (Agrawala 1987: figs). The *bhāravāhakayakṣas* are of the same denominator, elaborated by Gauri Parimoo, Development of Paradigms in Western Indian Cave Sculpture, *Art of Ajanta: New Persnectives* eds. Ratan Parimoo *et al.*, pp. 164-68, figs. 29-30.
15. Raju Kalidos, "Structure and Organisation of the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam Cave", *Annali* AION, 51:3, 1991, pp. 263-79.
16. Taking into due account a similar representation in the Pirāṉmalai cave temple, the couple are supposed to be Śiva and Umā, Umāsahitamūrti. *vide*, R.K.K.Rajarajan, "The Cave Temple at Tirumalai: Its Iconographical Significance", *East and West*, 42:2-4, 1992, pp. 489-94.
17. R.K.K. Rajarajan, article in n. 16.
18. Another scholar is of opinion that the images represent Jāṁbala and Hārītī. *vide*, S. Ramachandran, "Kubera Worship: A Study with special reference to Pirāṉmalai Cave Temple", ed., Raju Kalidos, "Art of Indian Asia: Interregional Affinities and Intraregional Variations in Cave Temples", Seminar Proceedings, Thanjavur, 1991 (MS). But the present view has been ably countered by R.K.K. Rajarajan in his article cited above n. 16. For illustrations of the images see Rajarajan's article.

CHAPTER V

Classification and Analysis

The iconographical typologies in respect of Gaṇapati and Skanda are very simple within the purview of early medieval art. None of the complicated forms, appearing in later medieval art and noted in canonical texts like *Śrītattvanidhi*, are found. In both cases the images are mostly either seated or standing. The dancing type in respect of Gaṇapati appears in the core Cāḷukyan zone. Skanda appears with consorts in the Far South.

Gaṇapati as an independent God is a rare phenomenon as he is found in case of the Jogeśvarī and Gaṇeśa-*leṇa* in Ellora. Majority of the pieces appear as linked with other deities or as part of other iconographical subject. The latter theme is popular in the Deccan and rarely examples are found in the far south. But Gaṇapati as a member of the Mātṛkas is a pan-India subject. Among others are Gaṇapati as a member of the bigger Naṭarāja theme. Besides, he forms part of the following subjects: Rāvaṇānugrahamurti, 'Dice game', Gajasaṁharamūrti, Kalyāṇasundaramūrti, Devī, Mahiṣāsuramardinī (Badāmī cave I and Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam north) and so on. Gaṇapati linked with other deities is a common idiom. The most popular among them is Mahiṣāsuramardinī, others being Skanda, Gajalakṣmī, Jyeṣṭhādevī and Caṇḍikeśvara.

The status of Skanda within the Hindu pantheon of the times is akin to that of Gaṇapati. Though the Kumārasaṁbhava elevates him to herohood, no form illustrating his belligerent activities appears in plastic arts. Popular with the celluloid medium are simple forms, seated or standing, with or without consorts and at times the Lord appears with peacock as Mayūravāhana or Sikhivāhana.

GAṆAPATI

The problem posed by Gaṇapati images of the early medieval period is one of the most complicated. Later day *śilpaśāstras* (for example the *Śrītattvanidhi*) speak of 32 forms of Gaṇapati but none of the early medieval images agree with the *Śrītattvanidhi* version. Spoken with reference to their postures, three basic types are discernible. They are seated, standing and dancing. Among the three, the seated images are very common and the standing images numerically lesser. Both the types are distributed over all the three regions of our survey. Dancing images are to be found only in Lower Deccan and thus it constitutes a rare factor.[1] Spoken with reference to the number of hands, the *caturbhuja* type predominates. The *dvibhuja* is numerically lesser. The *Śrītattvanidhi* speaks of only one type of *dvibhuja*-mūrti who is called Śakti-Gaṇapati. He is supposed to hold the *pāśa* and *aṅkuśa*. But in early medieval art no image with these two emblems appears. Again, the *śilpa* text speaks of 12 types of *caturbhuja*-mūrtis[2] who could not be compared with early medieval representations satisfactorily. There is lot of problem in identifying the individual type of images in early medieval art.

Few of the specimens from early medieval centres include certain rare motifs, for example a sugarcane or a bunch of paddy crop. These special attributes also create problems because the sugarcane is associated with eight forms of Gaṇapati and the paddy with three in the later medieval tradition. Furthermore, though Nṛtta-Gaṇapati is popular through the ages the *śilpa* text makes no note of such form.

From the discussion what is to be generalized is that the early medieval art of Gaṇapati constitutes a separate world of its own. The norms set by them could have provided roots for later developments. There is little in common. The images of the period could be brought only under some common heads like (1) Seated, (2) Standing, (3) Dancing and (4) *Dvibhuja*-Gaṇapati.

Dvibhuja-Gaṇapati:

Art historians generally treat the *dvibhuja*-Gaṇapati as the earliest in point of time.[3] But the images in the Udayagiri caves are not as a rule *dvibhuja*. Totally, nineteen specimens are traceable, which include the miniatures also. The distribution pattern is as follows: UD 4, LD 13 and FS 2.[4] It is to prove that the type is concentrated in the Lower Deccan. The two pieces from Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji are of the *dvibhuja* type. Centre-wise distribution is as follows: Elephanta 2, Ellora 1, Tākli Ḍhokeśvara 1, Badāmī 3, Mahākūṭa 1, Paṭṭadakkal 1, Aihole 4, Advisomanapaḷḷi 1, Bhairavakoṇḍa 1, Vallam 1 and Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi 1. Numerically speaking, Aihole and Badāmī top the list.

Of the objects found in the arms, the *modaka* or *laḍḍukam* is almost a common idiom as it is to be traced in the Elephanta, Takli Ḍhokeśvara, Badāmī, Mahākūṭa, Aihole, Gokarṇa, Iḍaguñji, Bhairavakoṇḍa and Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi specimens. Taking into due account the early date assigned to the Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji specimens, it may be suggested that the South Indian tradition of *dvibhuja*-Gaṇapati derives its inspiration from these two centres, which otherwise is likely to have its base in Udayagiri if the latter could be chronologically earlier.[5] I am of the view that the date assigned to the Iḍaguñji and Gokarṇa specimens has to be reconsidered. The process of percolation of the concept is likely to be from Udayagiri to coastal Karṇāṭaka and from there to the Tamil country, especially the Pāṇḍināḍu region. In forwarding the hypothesis we will have to keep in mind the Jogeśvarī image. It is *caturbhuja* but the impression as already pointed out is not the original. We are not sure whether the original had two arms. I guess it should have been *dvibhuja*. In such a hypothetical case, the percolation would have been from Udayagiri to the Tamil country via Jogeśvarī and coastal Karṇāṭaka.

Among the nineteen specimens under consideration only four are important as they command an independent status and also are life size images. Others form part of themes such as Naṭarāja, Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti, Mahiṣāsuramardini and such other types. Few of them (e.g. Ellora pieces) are miniatures. The Paṭṭadakkal specimen is of the dancing type and has to be brought under *Nāṭya*-Gaṇapati.

The objects that the Lord holds include the following in addition to the *modaka* and *laḍḍukam, paraśu,danta, aṅkuśa* and stencil. The following pairs deserve a worthy note:

Elephanta	*paraśu*	-	*modaka*
T. Ḍhokeśvara	*danta*	-	*laḍḍukam*
Badāmī I	*danta*	-	*laḍḍukam*
Bhūtanātha	*aṅkuśa*	-	*paraśu*
Mahākūṭa	stencil	-	*modaka*
Aihole cave	stencil	-	*laḍḍukam*
Gokarṇa	*danta*	-	*modaka*
Iḍaguñji	*danta*	-	*modaka*
Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi	*modaka*	-	*danta*

Excepting no. 4, all other specimens are uniform in assigning an eatable to the Lord. The other alternative emblem is either a *paraśu* or *aṅkuśa* or stencil.

The only canonified form of *dvibhuja*-Gaṇapati is Śakti-Gaṇapati. The emblems attributed to him are *pāśa* and *aṅkuśa*. He is supposed to be in the company of his beloved Śakti (mistress), embracing her. In none of the specimens *pāśa* is attributed to the Lord. Besides, Śakti, the most important component of the form is conspicuously missing. None of the early medieval specimens of *dvibhuja*-Gaṇapati could be called Śakti-Gaṇapati.

Seated-Gaṇapati:

Majority of the images of Gaṇapati are in seated posture. Out of a total of 125, 73 (58%) are seated. Among them 53 (72%) are independent images. Others are linked with other subjects or form part of Śaivite iconographical themes. While the independent images claim a status of eminence for the Lord as the primordial deity of the Gāṇāpatya cult, others would assign him a secondary or tertiary status within the bigger Śaivite family. The status of eminence for the Lord is proved by his presence in *garbhagṛha*.

The seated images are mostly *caturbhuja*. Later day canons of sculpture speak of a dozen types of *caturbhuja*-Gaṇapati. When the early medieval specimens in respect of their emblems are compared with these twenty four, few of them get closer to a form called Ekadanta-Gaṇapati. He is said to possess the following in his four arms: *ṭaṅka - japamālā - iṭṭli* (eatable rice cake)- *danta*.

There are about thirteen specimens from all three zones which fall in line with the features of Ekadanta-Gaṇapati. They are as follows:

Ellora XV *akṣamālā* - *paraśu* - *danta* - *modaka*
Ellora XV *akṣamālā* - *paraśu* - *mudrās*
Ellora XVII *akṣamālā* - *paraśu*
Ellora XXIA *akṣamālā* - *paraśu* - *modaka*
Ellora XXII *akṣamālā* - *paraśu* - *laḍḍukam*
Ellora- Gaṇeśa-*leṇa* *akṣamālā* - *paraśu* - *laḍḍukam* - *danta*
Paṭṭadakkal:
Pāpanātha *paraśu* - *akṣamālā* - *modaka* - *danta*
Alampūr-Bāla *paraśu* - *modaka* - *pāśa* - *aṅkuśa*
Alampūr-Padma *akṣamālā* - *modaka* - *paraśu*
Kuṭumiyāṉmalai *modaka* - *akṣamālā* - flower
Malaiyaṭippaṭṭi *akṣamālā* - *modaka* - *kaṭaka* - *mudrā*

In all the above specimens, the *akṣamālā* occurs uniformly while the *paraśu* equates with *ṭaṅka*. *Iṭṭili* is the pancake, an eatable, replaced by the *modaka* in several specimens.

The name, Ekadanta, stands for the single tusk that the Lord possesses. He is supposed to have plucked or cut one of his tusks to write down the notes dictated by Vyāsa when he was busy composing the *Mahābhārata*.[6] Ekadanta could have been one of the earliest forms of the Lord, which with little variation exists among the early medieval arts.

Two of the specimens from Ellora XXIB and Makipālaṉpaṭṭi attribute a bunch of paddy crop to the Lord. Among the thirty-two forms of Gaṇapati listed in *Śrītattvanidhi* two are endowed with a bunch of paddy crop. They are Mahā-Gaṇapati and Ucchiṣṭa-Gaṇapati. Mahā-Gaṇapati is supposed to be *daśabhuja* and Ucchiṣṭa-Gaṇapati *caturbhuja*. It is ordinarily suggested that Ucchiṣṭa-Gaṇapati is one who makes love with his mistress. The text under consideration refers to two types of the same form. One has an erotic background and the other is not. The two pieces from Ellora and Makipālaṉpaṭṭi are likely to be the earliest Ucchiṣṭa-Gaṇapati known to South Indian tradition. The images under study possess the following attributes:

Ellora XXI B : *laḍḍukam* - paddy crop
Mahibālaṉpaṭṭi : *danta* - paddy crop

Ucchiṣṭa-Gaṇapati is said to carry a flower (*nīlotphala*), pomegranate, *vīṇa* and bunch of paddy. In another type he tastes the *yoni* of his beloved consort. The concerned specimens are identified with the form with reference to paddy crop. It could otherwise be Mahā-Gaṇapati but in such a form the Lord is supposed to be endowed with ten hands.

Based on the exclusiveness of a particular symbol, another case for identification could also be presented here. There are specimens in the Tirumalaipuram cave temple and the Aihole museum. Both are *caturbhuja*, and possess the following emblems:

Aihole : *puṣtaka* - *danta* - stencil - *modaka*
Tirumalaipuram : *puṣtaka* - *modaka*- *danta* - rested on knee.

Among the twelve *caturbhuja* types only one, called *Dvija*-Gaṇapati, is endowed with the *puṣtaka*. His other three emblems are *japamālā*, *daṇḍa* and *kamaṇḍalū*. It seems the two specimens under consideration have appropriated the *danta* in lieu of *daṇḍa*. The problem is with regard to the other two emblems, the *japamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū*. Other images do not tally with the canonical mandate within a reasonable framework and pose problems for identification. The emblems which the Lord carries may be summed up as follows: *danta, modaka, daṇḍa, paraśu, pāśa, ghaṇṭa, akṣamālā*, flower, paddy crop, *puṣtaka*, stencil, *aṅkuśa*, bud of a flower, a creeper, *ṭaṅka* and sugarcane. The hands are in different *mudrās* like *abhaya, ūru, gaja, kaṭaka* and *tarjanī*.

The ornaments attributed to the Lord are almost the same but for some regional elements. In the Upper Deccan the Lord does not wear any headgear whereas in the Far South he is provided with a *karaṇḍamakuṭa*. A *catrāvali* appears above the head in the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñci. *Nāga-udarabandha* and *nāga-yajñopavīta* are common in the Upper Deccan while in the Far South *vastra-yajñopavīta* or *uttarīya* appear. The *keyuras* are of the *nāgamuri* character in the Upper Deccan. Another notable feature is the *padma* that appears on the Lord's head in Ellora (Cave XVII). Bells in place of anklets, called *kiṅkiṇi*, appear in the Upper Deccan very commonly.

Another important character of the *caturbhuja* images is the proboscis, arranged in two different ways. In the Far South it is *valampuri*. It is a rare phenomenon in the Upper Deccan while in the Lower Deccan comparatively a better representation of the form is given. What dominates the Deccani tradition is the *iṭampuri* images. In the Far South the *iṭampuri* images are common in the Pallava country. In other words, *valampuri* and *iṭampuri* are characteristic of the Far South and Upper Deccan respectively. In the Pallava country (Tamil Nadu region) and Lower Deccan an admixture of both the types is traceable. It is to point out the mutual influences. The following table presents a peep into the distribution pattern.[7]

	Upper Deccan	Lower Deccan	Far South	Total
Valampuri	1	4	8	13
Iṭampuri	19	12	7	38

Iṭampuri to begin with is the mode originally connected with Gaṇapati. It appears in Udayagiri and Jogeśvarī. The Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji specimens are *iṭampuri*. The Pāṇḍyas who first brought Gaṇapati to the Tamil country altered the mode by making the Lord *valampuri*. *Valampuri* in Tamil tradition is of the *uttama* type. Those who select pearls look out for *valampuri-muttu* 'pearl of the right warp'[8]. It seems to have been applied to Gaṇapati imagery also. The earliest Gaṇapati in Tamil Nadu (i.e., Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi) is of the *valampuri* type. The type of casting the images has percolated upto Elephanta because the miniature of *dvibhuja*-Gaṇapati found in the famous image of Naṭarāja is of the *valampuri* order. Strikingly enough, the representations in the Ellora caves are *iṭampuri*. Excepting a rare miniature in Badāmī, the *valampuri* type dominates the Lower Deccani art only in the Kṛṣṇā basin and Alampūr. The type is likely to have made an intrusion into the main zone of Cāḷukyan and Rāṣṭrakūṭa art via Moghulrājapuram, Alampūr and Badāmī.[9]

The seated type first appears in Jogeśvarī. It has roots in Udayagiri. The next landmark is that of Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi.[10] We may earmark the process of percolation from Udayagiri to Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi in one direction and Ellora-Badāmī in another. What is found in the Kṛṣṇā basin and Alampūr is a two way process of interaction, receiving messages direct from Badāmī and the Far South.

Numerically speaking, Lower Deccan tops the list with 30 specimens, the next being Upper Deccan 28 and the Far South 24. There is an even distribution in all zones. Among the centres the most conspicuous is Ellora. Here Lord is in his various aspects; housed in *garbhagṛha*, juxtaposed with Mahiṣāsuramardinī, part of the Mātṛkas, part of Śaivite panels, juxtaposed with Skanda and the independent representations. Strikingly enough, in the core Cāḷukyan zone there is no independent Gaṇapati at Badāmī. In the Far South, Kāñcīpuram takes the place of pride. Next comes the zones where independent representations acquire a fresh magnitude. The Lord appears in relation to Mahiṣāsuramardinī and Skanda. He is juxtaposed with Caṇḍikeśvara, Gajalakṣmī and Jyeṣṭhādevī. Gaṇapati juxtaposed with Gajalakṣmī and Jyeṣṭhā is characteristic of the Tamil country. His placement with Caṇḍikeśvara in the Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi cave provides the basis for the numerous other representations in Bhairavakoṇḍa.

Gaṇapati appearing at the *façade* level may be to signify his *vighnarāja* aspect. In any temple ritual, a devotee who makes an entry into the complex is expected to pay homage to the guardians first and then visit the temple proper. Gaṇapati posted at the gateway may command a secondary or tertiary status but important from the ritual point of view. If no homage is paid to the guardian deity, the visit of a devotee may turn out unsuccessful. *Dvārapālakas* also command such a status in the medieval tradition.[11] What is interesting is that Gaṇapati gets equated with a number of deities at different topographical segments. To begin with Udayagiri and Ellora, Mahiṣāsuramardinī and Skanda stand on par with Gaṇapati. In the Far South, in addition to these two Caṇḍikeśvara, Gajalakṣmī, Jyeṣṭhādevī and Gaṅgādharamurti find a place. On the theoretical level all these different manifestations of the gods and goddesses are on the same cadre as guardian-knots of a temple based South Indian culture.

Standing Gaṇapatī:

Earliest and most striking among the *sthānaka* images are from Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji.[12]

Both in *dvibhuja* aspect stand on the fringes of a saga in South Indian iconographic tradition relating to Gaṇapati. The only important specimen in the Far South is found in the Tiruccirāppaḷḷi lower cave. There are a number of miniatures in the Upper and Lower Deccan but most of them form part of Śaivite themes such as Naṭarāja, 'Dice Game', Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti, Kalyāṇasundaramūrti and Gajasaṁhāramūrti. There are two in Elephanta, four in Ellora, three in Badāmī and one each in Paṭṭadakkal and Aihole.

The miniatures are mostly *dvibhuja*, alike their pioneers, the Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji pieces. In Ellora they are about 3' in height and are *caturbhuja*. The Tiruccirāppaḷḷi work is *caturbhuja*.

The *sthānaka* type takes its origin in coastal Karnāṭaka and moves in directions towards the Upper Deccan and Far South. In Ellora and Tiruccirāppaḷḷi the iconographical development takes a new course by providing the Lord with four hands.

Among the miniatures which form part of other subjects those in Badāmī (Mahiṣāsuramardinī), Aihole (Naṭarāja), Elephanta (Naṭarāja) and Ellora XIV (Dice Game and Gajasaṁhāramūrti) are outstanding. They add a new dimension to the imagery of Gaṇapati.

The *caturbhuja* images of the type may be compared with later canonical mandate to find out possibilities of their identification. Though canonical texts speak of 32 forms of Gaṇapati, nothing relating to their posture, viz., seated or standing, is noted. Anything in common with regard to the emblems in hands may help identification. The features of the important images are as follows:

Ellora XIV : *paraśu* - *danta* - *modaka*
Ellora XV : *ghaṇṭa* - *paraśu* - *ūruhasta* - *modaka*
Iḍaguñji : *danta* - *modaka*
Gokarṇa : *danta* - *modaka*
Tiruccirāppaḷḷi : *danta* - flower - *akṣamālā*

The earliest specimen from Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji provide for *danta* and *modaka*, which form part of the *caturbhuja* types, including new elements like *paraśu*, *ghaṇṭa* and *akṣamālā*. Among the *caturbhuja* images from canonical texts, two deserve mention here. They are:

Haridhra-Gaṇapati : *pāśa* - *aṅkuśa* - *modaka* - *danta*
Sṛṣṭi-Gaṇapati : *pāśa* - *aṅkuśa* - *danta* - *cyūta* (mango)

Both include the antique emblems found in the Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji specimens, i.e., the *danta* and an eatable. Regarding the other emblems there is some deviation. Therefore the five important specimens of *sthānaka*-Gaṇapati may be the equal of either Haridhra or Sṛṣṭi-Gaṇapati.

Dancing Gaṇapati

Nṛtta or *Nāṭya*-Gaṇapati is mostly of Lower Deccan. There is a stray piece in the Far

South at Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam but its date is debatable.The specimen from Lower Deccan are found at Paṭṭadakkal and Alampūr. Two are *dvibhuja* and one *caturbhuja*. The Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam image is *caturbhuja*. The specimen found in the Pāpanātha temple at Paṭṭadakkal bears the following marks: *paraśu, akṣamālā, modaka* and *danta*.

Most striking among the dancing images is from Alampūr that forms part of Naṭarāja. Gaṇapati appears in the company of Naṭarāja in the Upper Deccan but is not found enacting any recital (e.g. famous Aihole specimen and the one in Badami Cave I). The Alampūr piece is an epoch-making creation which is full of dynamism. It appears Gaṇapati is inspired by Naṭarāja's unearthly performance and even though he is potbellied and heavy-headed, starts dancing himself.[13] The images in Paṭṭadakkal are independent. During the later medieval period *Nṛtta*-Gaṇapati is a popular theme in South Indian Art. It is interesting to note that the *Śrītattvanidhi* says nothing about dancing Gaṇapati. Taking its origin in Alampūr, the form is likely to have influenced artists of Paṭṭadakkal and Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam.

Among the other forms are *Pañcamukha*-Gaṇapati and the Āyudhapuruṣa who forms part of Devī's emblem. These two are from Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam (south) and Laṅkeśvara in Ellora. The date of the Laṅkeśvara piece could not be disputed. It gives a hint to the origin of the elephant-headed God in Hindu mythology. Maybe Devī holds a lump in her arm from which Gaṇapati takes his birth. The *Pañcamukha*-Gaṇapati of Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam is a novel theme and probably a later medieval addition. It forms part of Naṭarāja and appears atop an *ardhasthamba*. Another motif appearing in connection with the same subject is that of *Mayūravāhana*-Skanda who appears on the other side of the Naṭarāja panel atop an *ardhastambha* motif. The type of *Mayūravāhana* is already known to early medieval tradition and that too appearing on pillars (e.g. Badāmī Cave II). Spoken with reference to the contemporary evidence, both *Pañcamukha*-Gaṇapati and *Mayūravāhana* of Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam will have to be treated works of the age. In such a case the *Pañcamukha*-Gaṇapati concept will have its roots in the Pāṇḍya country. The only type of five-faced Gaṇapati in canonical texts is called Heramba-Gaṇapati. He is said to have a lion vehicle and ten hands. The hands bear *abhayamudrā, varadamudrā, pāśa, danta, japamālā, aṅkuśa, ṭaṅka, muḍgara, modaka* and a fruit. The hands in the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam specimen are many but much defaced

SKANDA

The earliest specimens of Skanda from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa and the Mathurā museum are simple. Both are *sthānaka* and *dvibhuja*. The Lord holds the *śakti* in one of the hands. The images measure 3-4' in height. Dated in the early century of the Christian era, these two provide the basis for the later medieval developments. Interesting enough, though the Caṅkam literature speaks eloquently about the cult of Skanda and his imagery, no early specimen has come out from Tamil Nadu. Maybe they were either painted impressions as noted in the literary works or made of perishable materials as attested by the Maṇṭakappaṭṭu inscription.[14]

Totally 67 images of Skanda are traceable from among the catalogue of early medieval temples. Among them the major chunk (nos. 39) are on Somāskanda. Excluding this we have a total of 28 images of Skanda. These could broadly be divided into *sthānaka* and *āsana*. Both types include Sikhivāhana also. In both cases the Lord is either alone or in the company of his mistresses. Basically speaking there are only two iconographical variables.

Standing Skanda:

All the 10 in Upper Deccan are standing images. The distribution is one each in Jogeśvarī, Bhokardan and Māhūr, two in Elephanta and four in Ellora. Most of the images are life size, the tallest being found in Elephanta. Of the ten in Lower Deccan, excepting one each in Alampūr and Aihole others are seated. In the Far South there are four standing images. In Somāskanda the Lord is mostly standing. Out of a sum total of 28, the standing images are 17. Majority of them are found in Upper Deccan. The Far South comes next. Presence of the type in Lower Deccan is in negligible proportion.

The stance in Upper Deccan is uniformly *samabhaṅga*. In the Far South three are *samapāda* and one *dvibhaṅga*. The only image in the Lower Deccan is *tribhaṅga*. In the Lower Deccan and Far South the images are independent while in the Upper Deccan three form part of Naṭarāja, Kailāsanātha and Somāskanda. One is juxtaposed with Mahiṣāsuramardinī.

The Elephanta and Aihole specimens would prove the fact that the status of Skanda was still dependent like Gaṇapati who constitutes a member of the family of Śiva. Comparatively speaking, Skanda is far better than Gaṇapati because numerically the dependent images are very few.

The number of hands are either two or four. The earliest specimens from Mathura and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa are *dvibhuja*. Totally ten specimens are *dvibhuja* and the remaining five *caturbhuja*. The emblems include *śakti* in most cases, others being *triśūla*, cock, *daṇḍa*, *akṣamālā* and a flower. The Brahmasāsta of Māmallapuram holds the *kamaṇḍalū*. The *mudrās* associated with the Lord are *ūru*, *kaṭi*, *abhaya* and *varada*.

The Lord's vehicle, *śikhi* or *mayūra* appears in a number of specimens. They are from Ellora (nos. XV, XXI), Alampūr and Tirumalai.

Such of these images also rare elements. The *śakti* in Elephanta is personified. In the same, the Lord is attended by Brahmā and Viṣṇu who fail to appear in other illustrations of the age. The Lord wears a necklace made of nails in the Aihole specimen while at Māmallapuram he wears the *cannavīra*.

The images which include *mayūravāhana* could be called *Sikhivāhana* as it is one among the epithets of the Lord as included in his *asṭṭottaram*. The Māmallapurm piece in view of its individuality is called Brahmasāsta. Others are *Sthānaka*-Skanda.

It is rather difficult to trace channels of ideological inflow from region to region because during the pre-medieval period there were two important courses of development. The Tamil tradition has its own individuality that mixes with the Sanskritic ideas by about the 4th-5th century A.D. Depending upon the nature of iconographical developments certain hypothetical suggestions may be made. The developments in Upper Deccan are likely to be derivations from the Kuṣāṇa school. The roots of the Badāmī school may be traced back to the Nāgārjunakoṇḍa prototype. The developments in Tamil Nadu are based on the local myths. It is because of the Lord's Devīs (e.g. Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam south cave).

Seated Skanda:

Totally nine specimens are traceable of which six are from Lower Deccan and three from the Far South. No seated image is to be found in Upper Deccan. It constitutes a random factor.[15]

The images are either *dvi* or *caturbhuja*. The objects found in hands include *śakti, triśūla, daṇḍa*, flower, *vajra* and *akṣamālā*. Among the seated images, the most remarkable are from the Pāṇḍya country. Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam north and Āṉaimalai are the best from the thematic and stylistic point of view. The Lord is to be found with his consort, either Devasenā (Āṉaimalai) or Vaḷḷi (Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam-south). In the *sthānaka* image from Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam-south both the consorts merge. Strangely enough, none of the specimens from the two Deccans include Devī with Skanda. The Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam north is a classical piece on the subject that includes a host of attendant deities. The Lord's special marks like the peacock, cock and elephant are carved. These are repeated in the Āṉaimalai and Tirumalai cave temples.

Among the seated types, the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam and Āṉaimalai specimens are unique from another point of view, the latter housed in *garbhagṛha*. Though archaeological excavations have proved the existence of a temple for Skanda as early as the early centuries of the Christian era, no temple for Skanda is known to exist in the Lower Deccan, including the Kṛṣṇā basin. In this respect, the tradition in the Far South is deep rooted.

An important point to be noted in respect of the Lower Deccan specimens is that they are by and large miniatures, not more than 3' in height. Among them the most conspicuous is the Ucchimalli-*guḍi* piece that perhaps relates to the rendition of demons. In the Far South all are life size and noted for their iconographical excellence.

Somāskandamūrti

Totally there are 39 specimens, the lion's share being contributed by the Pallavas. There are rare occurrences of one each from Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, Paṭṭadakkal and Ellora. The earliest specimens are at Māmallapuram from where the form had its impact on the art of Kāñci. From Kāñci, it moved northwards upto Paṭṭadakkal and Ellora. In the deep south, the Pāṇḍyas appropriated the idiom in their Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam cave.

The important aspect of the image in the Pallava territory is that it includes Devī, Skanda as a child, Brahmā and Viṣṇu, and the Lord Śiva. In areas other than Pallava, Brahmā and Viṣṇu do not appear. Skanda is either standing in between Śiva and Umā or seated on the lap of Umā. Interestingly, in the Ellora piece Skanda stands on the lap of Śiva.

Skanda in all these specimens is *dvibhuja* and carries nothing. In the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam piece he is found holding a *padma* in the right hand.

In the Tamil country Somāskanda appears on the back wall of the *garbhagṛha.* In Paṭṭadakkal and Ellora they are found, either on the ceiling or the *antarāla.* The temples of Māmallapuram and Kāñcīpuram including Somāskandamūrti within the precincts of the *garbhagṛha* are masterpieces.

CONSOLIDATION

Clearly definable concepts of iconography in respect of Gaṇapati and Skanda had not evolved during the early medieval period. They still constitute members of the family of Śiva as pointed out by the motifs in which Gaṇapati and Skanda form a micro unit. Good examples are the Naṭarājas of Elephanta and Aihole. That does not mean both were totally dependent deities. They had attained *garbhagṛha* status in the Upper Deccan and the Far South. It may suggest the fact that they were slowly breaking off from the main Śaivite or Śākta stock. The latter idea holds good in case of the representations in Badāmī and Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam.

Comparatively speaking, the place of Gaṇapati is better within the pantheon of the age. Totally 125 images are counted of which atleast 64 (50%) claim independent status for the Lord. A handful of them (6) are housed in *garbhagṛhas. Nāṭya* Gaṇapati and *Pañcamukha*-Gaṇapati are forms, which claim iconographical status for the Lord. Among the *caturbhuja* images, few fall in line with forms called *Ekadanta*-Gaṇapati, could be applied in case of images of the type. Among the *sthānaka* images, there are vague clues for being identified with Haridhra and *Sṛṣṭi* -Gaṇapati. From out of a total 32 canonified forms, there are possibilities of 5 being isolated and identified. Among the non-canonified or popular folk forms, we have *Nāṭya* and *Valampuri*-Gaṇapati. The polycephalous (five-faced) may be the earliest Heramba-Gaṇapati.

In an overall analysis we note that the most outstanding works on Gaṇapati are from the Upper Deccan and the Pāṇḍināḍu are in the Far South. In depth and volume of composition, thematic input and stylistic output and iconographical proliferation, the Cāḷukyan artists of Ellora and the Pāṇḍyan artists of the Far South had laid the foundations of a newly emerging Gāṇāpatya cult in the annals of South India.

The place of Skanda is in no way better placed than Gaṇapati. Skanda though a popular literary hero, both in Tamil and Sanskrit, is not artistically well defined. He still forms part of the family of Śiva as appearing in few of the iconographical illustrations pertainng to Śaivite themes. His association with Devī is pointed out in some quarters (Ellora XXI, Badāmī I and Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam north). That means a totally independent cult of Kaumāras, relinquishing their allegiance to the Śaivas or Śāktas, had not yet evolved.

It is indispensable to note the earlier traditions recorded by literature and archaeological excavations. In Tamil we have a clearly discernible cult of Murukaṉ who was presiding deity of the *kuṟiñci* tract of land. His temples in important centres like Paraṅkuṉṟam, festivals, worship and rituals and popular beliefs thereof are recorded. Excavations in Nāgārjunakoṇḍa have revealed the existence of an independent temple of Skanda. The tradition had continued upto the Gupta times as we find the earliest rock-cut temples (Cave III) at Udayagiri. Paradoxically none of the cave temples in Upper Deccan show visible traits of Central Indian influence and cult development that includes relics of independent temples for Skanda. The solitary cella for Skanda in Cave XXI is only an auxiliary chapel, an adjunct to the main Liṅgadeva shrine. In the respect, the Far South is better as there are evidences of not less than three cave temples for Skanda at Āṉaimalai, Tirumalai and Tiruccentūr.

Iconographically speaking, none of the complicated forms found in later *śāstras* are to be found among the early medieval monuments. Somāskandamūrti is the only good example of which there is a heavy concentration in the core Pallava country but even in the case the main hero is Śiva and not Skanda. It may point out a process of religious syncreticism, merging Śiva, Śakti, Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Skanda, into an entity but the main figures are Śiva and Umā. Then there is Śikhivāhana, both in seated and *sthānaka* aspects. The ceiling panel in Aihole relates to the rendition of a demon that perhaps is Tārakāri but we cannot be sure about this. In Tamil Nadu the Lord appears as Devīsahitamūrti (= Umāsahitamūrti) in the Āṉaimalai, Tirumalai and two Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam caves. Traditionally, Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam (north) is believed to be the place where Murukaṉ got married to Devasenā. It could be a tentative case. It is interesting to find the Lord in Āṉaimalai beautifully decorated like a bridegroom and attended by *ṛṣis* to bless him.

REFERENCES

1. 'Rare factor', for explanation of the usage, see Vols. I and II. Rare factor stands for iconographical variables present in any one of the three zones, and random factor stands for those present in any two of the zones.
2. *Śrītattvanidhi*, Vol. I, 3:70-101. See Chap. I for documentation.
3. See A. Sundara's article on the Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji images of Gaṇapati.
4. UD stands for Upper Deccan, LD Lower Deccan and FS Far South.

TABLE IV

DISTRIBUTION OF ICONOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES: CONSOLIDATED LIST

GAṆAPATI

Iconographical variables	Distribution pattern - region-wise			Total
	Upper Deccan	Lower Deccan	Far South	
Independent	9	24	20	53
Housed in cella	6	-	-	6
Nāṭya-Gaṇapati	-	3	1	4
Pañcamukha-Gaṇapati	-	-	1	1
p/o Mātṛkas	7	6	3	16
p/o Mahiṣāmardinī	-	1	*	1
jux. Mahiṣāmardinī	3	2	**	5
p/o Śaivite themes	10	2	15	27
p/o pillars/doorframes/ *kūḍu*	5	2	4	11
Āyudha-puruṣa (?)	1	-	-	1
Total	41	40	44	125

SKANDA

Iconographical variables	Distribution pattern - region-wise			Total
	Upper Deccan	Lower Deccan	Far South	
Independent	4	2	2	8
Mayūravāhana/independent-	5	1	6	
Housed in cella	1	-	3	4
with Devīs	-	-	4	4
Somāskanda	1	1	37	39
p/o Śaivite themes	3	1	-	4
jux. Mahiṣāmardinī	1	-	-	1
Kumārasaṁbhava	-	1	-	1
Total	10	10	47	67

* Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam north is the nearest equal of Badāmī.

** Tiruchirāppaḷḷi lower is of this cateogry.

p/o part of

jux. juxtaposed

5. B.L. Nagarch, "The Udayagiri Caves", Cave Temples of South India: Interregional Affinities and Intraregional Variations, ed. Raju Kalidos, 1990 (MS).
6. T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. I, Pt. I, p. 37.
7. Numerals show figures recorded by the author. An accurate picture should be recorded by a new survey. That is to say my figures are not final.
8. The *Cilappatikāram* (1:2: 1.72) records the tradition of a hero, showering encomiums on his beloved sweetheart by calling her *mācarupoṉ* and *valampuri-muttu*, meaning '(you) molten (faultless) gold and pearl of right warp'. *Valampuri* is something very rare and unattainable. The tradition of *Valampuri*-Gaṇapati changes very much in Tamil Nadu during the later medieval period. In Cōḻa art it is difficult to come across the type.
9. Scholars like K.R. Srinivasan (1971: *passim*) believe that much of the Cāḷukyan influence reached the Tamil country through the Pāṇḍyas via the Koṅgu region. The reason attributed is that both were on amicable terms when the Pallavas and Cāḷukyas were all the time at loggerheads. Our study has proved the fact that much of influence from the Tamil country has percolated into the Cāḷukyan art centres by way of Bhairavakoṇḍa, Moghulrājapuram, Alampūr, Badāmī-Paṭṭadakkal and upto Ellora. Caṇḍikeśvara is a good example. See Raju Kalidos, Tamil Interaction with Ellora, *Ellora Caves Sculptures and Architecture*, eds. Ratan Parimoo *et al.*, pp. 425-28.
10. R. Nagaswamy assigns the Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi cave to the 5th century A.D. See his article in *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XXVII, 1964, pp. 265-68.
11. See Vol. IV Pt. II for symbolism of *dvārapālakas* in Indian art.
12. I have not visited Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji. I am thankful to Professor A. Sundara of the Karnatak University for providing me the photographs.
13. For a detailed discussion see Raju Kalidos, "Ūrdhvatāṇḍavam in South Indian Art", paper presented in the World Tamil Conference, Kuala Lumpur, 1987; *East and West*, 46: 3-4, 1996.
14. The cellae of the Maṇṭagappaṭṭu cave though empty still retains traces of pigments of painting. The Caṅkam work, *Paripāṭal*, has references to painted images in the then temple of Murukaṉ at Maturai.
15. *Supra*, n. 1.

CHAPTER VI

Reflections on Social Values and Aesthetic Trends

There is a popular saying in Tamil which cryptically sums up the social beliefs with regard to the two sons of Śiva;

> *Āṉaimātiri oru piḷḷai, aḻaka oru piḷḷai*
> 'An elephant-like child and one beautiful'.

The statement has both an aesthetic and a meaningful appeal. The like-an-elephant child obviously refers to Gaṇapati and the beautiful one is Murukaṉ. That is to say the latter is handsome and the former not so. The implication is not on the wrong side and may not refer to Gaṇapati as an ugly one but he is not handsome. On the other hand, *Muruku* in Tamil means 'beauty' and Murukaṉ 'the handsome'.[1] Where there is beauty, there may not be wisdom. In other words, beauty and wisdom seldom go together. That is why Murukaṉ is God of beauty, always engaged in romances but heroic at the same time. Gaṇapati has a big head, elephant-like, winnow-like ears, and a big stomach. He is fond of eating all the time like an elephant and so is in possession of some eatables, *modaka*, *laḍḍukam* or sugarcane after which elephants are crazy. Being gluttons, he is giant-like and devoid of the finest traits of *puruṣa-lakṣaṇa* and not so handsome. On the other hand, he like an elephant is intelligent and noted for his wisdom, memory and erudite education.[2] He is the God of Learning who comes next only to Sarasvatī. Again like an elephant, he never forgets insults thrown on him and never forgives unless one repents for it. He throws obstacles on the way of such people and so is called Vighneśvara.[3] He removes the obstacles if one feels sorry for his misbehaviour.

The above two basic characters in the personality of Murukaṉ and Gaṇapati is retold in the form of popular myths. Once Śiva conducted a competition between his two sons. A fruit of knowledge was to be awarded, to one who circumambulates the world first. Murukaṉ had for his vehicle the fast moving *sikhi* or *mayūra* 'peacock' and immediately mounted the bird to come around the worlds. In this form the Lord is called *sarvalokapradakṣiṇamūrti*.[4] The pot-bellied and elephant-headed Gaṇapati's vehicale was a bandicoot, another gluttonous creature like his master, who could not go fast. But Gaṇapati exercised his intelligence and thought for a while where the world is ? and concluded that for a juvenile none but his parent is the world. He moved around his parents not once but thrice and claimed the fruit that was awarded. It shows how sagacious Gaṇapati was. Another myth relates to how the Lord could lay obstacles and cause troubles. The victims were both Śiva and Murukaṉ. Now, when Śiva according to the myth, wanted to topple the Tripuras, collected a huge army and moved to the battlefield. Before embarking upon the project, he forget to offer *pūjā* to Vighneśvara. That is to say anyone commencing a new venture is expected to offer prayers to the lord of obstacles. The car in which Śiva moved broke down within a short time after it took off. It was caused by none other than Gaṇapati. The place where the car broke down is called Accirupakkam in Ceṅkalpaṭṭu district.[5] Śiva could resume his journey only after propitiating Gaṇapati. In the case of Murukaṉ, when he was in love with Vaḷḷi, he paid a visit to hill country where the beautiful maid was living. Before leaving his abode in the Kailāsa, Murukaṉ failed to offer his respects to Gaṇapati and solicit his blessings. All his moves in the love affair produced negative results to begin with. Then, Murukaṉ realising his folly offered *pūjā* through his mind's eye, which Gaṇapati accepted, came in the guise of an elephant and brought about an amicable settlement of the affair.[6]

People steeped in tradition consider Murukaṉ and Gaṇapati the ideal children. They opt for two boys atleast, like Murukaṉ (beautiful) and Gaṇapati (wisdom).

The idea of family of gods reaches a definitive shape and maturity by about the 6th century A.D. The *Suprabhedāgama* and the Nāyaṉmār treat Gaṇapati the sons of Śiva and Umā who mated, disguised as elephants, leading to the birth of a son with qualities of an elephant. The *Kumārasaṁbhava* of Kālidāsa presents a romantic account of the *saṁbhava* 'birth' of Kumāra. In the process of the genesis of a *kumāra* 'son', several of the family of gods are involved; they being Agni, Indra, the *kṛttika* mothers and Devī herself. Indra gives his daughter in marriage to Skanda.[7] He derives his power (*śakti*) from Devī. He has an occasion for a confrontation with Brahmā and appropriates his qualities as Lord Creater. All the gods were linked with one another and the sons of a family of gods at one level served to integrate the society. There were sects within the fold but all were below the roof of a common house. We find in several of the cave temples wherein there are more than one *garbhagṛhas*. The *ṣaṇmatas* or *aṟuvakaiccamayam* are ideologically different from one another but basically served to integrate the society and not dissuade it from unity. We may be sure because a devotee visiting a cave temple like Bhokardān, Pallāvaram, Kuraṅkanilmuṭṭam or Viḻappākkam in those times would not have closed his eyes for a deity housed in one cella and offered his prayer to one of his *iṣṭadevatā* in another.

Gaṇapati and Kumara are linked with one another in several of the social beliefs. The Hindus consider one the 'father child' and the other 'mother child'. That is to say one is pet for either the father or mother. We find this sociological motion linked with the story of Gaṇapati and Skanda. That is to say Gaṇapati is the 'mother child', born out of a lump of the Mother's bodily impurities according to one version of the myth. He came to be regarded as the beloved son of the Mother. On the other hand, Kumara was the resultant, produced by the fiery seeds of Śiva, with no effort on the part of the Mother. It is better illustrated in the Somāskanda of Ellora. Instead of being standing in between the Father and Mother as is usually the case in Pallava art, Kumara appears standing on the lap of Śiva. Similarly, Gaṇapati appears associated with the Mothers. Gaṇapati in the company of the Mātṛkas is a good case in consideration. The juxtaposition of Mahiṣāsuramardinī and Gaṇapati in several of the cave temples in Ellora and Badāmī is another example.

Gaṇapati in the north seems to have commanded a better social status than the Far South. The idea is better illustrated in the cave temples of the Deccan. Images of Gaṇapati always appear on the right side of the temple (e.g. nos. XV, XVI, XVII, XXI of Ellora, Bhairavakoṇḍa) and in these cases Devī (Mahiṣāsuramardinī) commands the *vāmācāra* status. The tradition has its influence in the Tamil country upto Kāñcīpuram, the core zone of Pallava art. In the Vallam cave Gaṇapati is on the right side. In the Far South, Gaṇapati is assigned the *vāmācāra* place.[8] Good examples are Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam and Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi. In these cases Murukaṉ and Caṇḍikeśvara occupy the right side while Gaṇapati takes the *vāmācāra* place. For the Tamils their beloved god, Murukaṉ, is more important than the imported Gaṇapati. They would even assign a better status to a God-man like Caṇḍikeśvara.

The concept of *Valampuri*-Gaṇapati also may have its roots in sociological notions. The Tamils in the deep south might have considered the *itampuri* - Gaṇapati something inauspicious. *Valampuri* is of the *uttama* type[9] and so ever since the days of Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi an image of Gaṇapati came to be wrought in a new mould with the proboscis turned to the right side. *Valampuri* is a concept known to the Far South and slowly had its intrusion into the Deccan. Later, it lost ground and fell into disuse even in Tamil Nadu. In Cōḷa art, beginning with the middle of the 9th century A.D., such a type is not to be found. But, it continued to survive and sporadically specimens are traceable down to the Vijayanagara and contemporary times. The Tamils of the early medieval period could have created such a form to distinguish their god from the northern one. That may be the reason why the Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi inscription calls the Lord 'Deśivināyakar' as opposed to the *videśi-iṭampuri*-Vināyaka. We do not know whether the *erukku*-god and Catukkapūtam of the Caṅkam time were elephant-headed and that they had their proboscis turned to the right.

Eventhough Gaṇapati was treated the God of Obstacles, he was never a maligned spirit. On the other hand the status of Skanda seems to have been akin to that of a forest nymph who would beguile a traveller and take possession of the individual. Even in later times, people were prohibited from visiting his temple at odd hours. Murukaṉ seems to have commanded such a status at one point of time in Tamil Nadu. The Caṅkam works refer to him as Kaṭampan, a god who lives in the tree or one who is transformed into a tree. He is equated with *aṇaṅku*, a maligned nymph, who takes possession of girls and torments them with an overdose of erotic sentiments.[10] The *Maṇimēkalai* (episode 4, 11. 49-50), a

Tamil epic of the 6th century A.D., the keynote of which is a continuation of *Cilappatikāram*, while writing about a lascivions Cōḻa, compares him with Kaṭampaṉ. The analogy between the hero of the epic, Utayakumaraṉ and Kaṭampaṉ (Murukaṉ) is very striking because the prince is travelling in his chariot to snatch the hands of a beautiful maiden, the heroine Maṇimēkalai, who had renounced worldly life and become a Buddhist nun. Murukaṉ was the deity of lovers who adored him not out of admiration but fear. The fear could have been that he takes possession of girls. The picture completely changes by the lapse of time and Murukaṉ is elevated to the status of an ideal God of the Tamil tradition.

Murukaṉ's changing personality is better pictured in the Far South by making him the beloved husband of two wives. Iconographical illustrations also show him with wives, one or two. But in the north, he is all alone and a much feared god if not the beloved of the folk. None of the specimens from the two Deccans show Skaṇda with consorts.[11]

The Tamil tradition was catholic in spirit. The society eventhough deep rooted in its perspective of a God of love, adventure and heroism had no reservation in appropriating north Indian idioms such as Devasenā.

The analogy behind the concept of two children is due to the social value that rests on education and heroism. The early medieval society firmly believed in these two virtues as the noblest. It also shows the ways that the elder generation showed to the younger. People thought that the future is in the hands of the younger generation and tutored them appropriately. Certain of the iconographical idioms appropriated by Gaṇapati and Skanda from their parents point out the subtle factor. Gaṇapati is endowed with the *pāśa* and *aṅkuśa*, and the *trinetra*, all emblems of Śiva. Devī offers her *śakti* to Skanda and in few of the specimens in the Deccan he holds the *triśūla*. These emblems inherited by the sons from their parents would prove the social belief that the future being vested with children they bequeath their belongings to the heirs.

Another important idea is that those who possessed wisdom were highly respected.[12] The elder generation did not hesitate to take lessons from the younger and by their example set the models for the future. Skanda as Brahmasāsta and Vighneśvara obstructing the way of Tripurari's chariot are good examples. Brahmā was the *pitāmaha* but that did not qualify him to be *sṛṣṭikarta* when he could not explain the *praṇavamantra* to Skanda. He was thrown into the gutters and Skanda himself started functioning as Lord Creator. It was too much on the part of a boy and so when Śiva asked him the reasons for his audacious behaviour Skanda reiterated his valid case. Śiva asked him whether he knew the meaning of *praṇava*.[13] Skanda's reply was 'yes'. Then, Śiva wanted him to divulge the secrets. It could be done only if Śiva could approach Skanda, eventhough he was the latter's father, with the discipline expected of a student. In the teacher-student relationship there is no age and respect for blood connections. Śiva set the model and took the lesson by closing his mouth, bowing the head and standing in front of the seated son.[14] Similarly, eventhough Brahmā was the pinnacle of worldly wisdom, he was cast into the bars for not knowing what was expected of him. In case of Gaṇapati, similar legends are related. He did not spare his own father and brother when they paid no heed to his status as Vighneśvara. Śiva's chariot will not move and Skanda's love affair produce positive results. The lesson is whoever is entitled for an honour should be offered it whether a junior or senior.

Skanda getting married to two wives had its own reflections on the social plane. The case of Gaṇapati was something different. He being elephant-headed and pot-bellied, nobody would come forward to marry him. It is said he went towards the water reservoir and sat below the *aracu* (Pipal tree), looking out for the best wife, one reflecting features of his own mother. Later, it came to be believed that he took two wives, called Siddhi and Buddhi, the personifications of 'will power' and 'intelligence'.[15] The Tantric forms, illustrating erotic features like Ucchiṣṭa-Gaṇapati, are very late by origin and come to the picture by about 16th century A.D. Skanda took two wives, Vaḷḷi and Devasenā. They had no peaceful coexistence and like Rukmiṇī-Bhāmā started quarreling with each other. Allegorically, it may stand for the two polarities of Indian cultural life, the Āryan and the Drāviḍian, who through Devasenā and Vaḷḷi respectively, consider themselves supreme in their own way. From the societal point of view one taking two wives was not respected. But it was not uncommon for an Indian taking too many wives. That too in case of royal families it was quite a normal affair. A repugnance existed and the ideal wife was considered to be one for a man. *Oruvaṉukku orutti* is the Tamil maxim. The *Cilappatikāram* attributes all the misfortunes of its hero for taking the hand of a second maiden. It was popularly believed that one who takes the second wife will be turned into a mendicant. Exactly that was what happened to Murukaṉ. He is called Moṭṭaiāṇṭi in Tamil tradition which means 'the shaven-headed mendicant'. In one of his six abodes, i.e., Paḻaṉi, he is supposed to stand as a mendicant with a bald head and wearing garlands of *rudrākṣa*, symbolic of *sanyāsa*. The beautiful saying in Tamil is:*Reṇṭu poṇṭāṭṭi kaṭṭi tiṇṭāṭitteruvil niṉṉu paṇṭāram āṉāṉ* (slang) '(he) got married to two wives, tossed in worldly troubles was thrown into the street corner and converted into a beggar.'[16] It is interesting to find that the two sons of Śiva ultimately become recluses. Gaṇapati like the Buddha is seated below the Pipal tree and Murukaṉ standing as a mendicant atop the Paḻaṉi hill.

The dress and ornaments attributed to Gaṇapati and Skanda are very simple. Both wear long loin clothes and *uttarīya*. The *keyūras* and *udarabandha* for Gaṇapati in Upper Deccan consist of *nāgas*. The other ornaments are very simple. Gaṇapati's corpulent belly and elephantine head are characteristic. He wears short *makuṭas* in the Far South. The hands being either two or four, the images do not show complicated details. Skanda wears the *cannavīra* in the Far South. The Māmallapuram and Kaḻukumalai pieces are iconographically advanced in the respect. Being iconographically not well developed, Gaṇapati and Skanda have to go a long way to see levels of saturation only at the fag end of the later medieval period.

Images of Skanda and Gaṇapati during the period under study set the norms of aesthetics in respect of both the forms. Skanda is tall, slim, has an oval or round face and endowed with all *puruṣa-lakṣaṇas*. Nothing in him evokes terror or fear as the society viewed him. The finest pieces are from Elephanta, Ellora, Māmallapuram, Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, Āṉaimalai and Kaḻukumalai. Similarly, Gaṇapati is neither fear generating nor ugly. The Indian artists of the early medieval times had exercised their master skill by amalgamating the animal (elephant) and human forms into an entity as they had already portrayed Nṛsiṁha and created some of the masterpieces of the age. The Vallam piece stands on the fringes of a great saga in iconographical development to prove the aesthetic skill of the Tamil artist. Those appearing in the Ellora caves (especially no. XVII), Kuṭumiyāmalai, Makipālaṉpaṭṭi and Tirumalaipuram are classical impressions on the subject. From Udayagiri to Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi and Tirumalaipuram, there stands a great tradition in setting the aesthetic norms of theriomorphic deities. Skanda and Gaṇapati though representing the two poles of beauty and its opposite are full of aesthetic expressions in the visual arts. None of the *rasas*, deployed in making images of Viṣṇu, Śiva and Devī, are to be found in Skanda and Gaṇapati but their simple forms set the models for the future.

REFERENCES

1. The word stands for 'youthfulness' (T. *iḷamai*), fragrance (T. *maṇam*), beauty (T. *aḻaku* according to the *Piṅkalam*), and honey (T. *tēṉ*) or toddy (T. *kaḷ*). See *Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. VI, p. 3279. There are evidences of literary usage in *Maṇimēkalai* (episode 5, 11. 13-14) wherein the hero of the epic (*infra* for details of text and its subject matter) is compared with Murukaṉ, the handsome one.
2. Gaṇapati is invoked not only to ward of hurdles but also to bless one with the best of education. The most popular invocation is:
   Pālum teḷitēṉum pākum paruppumivai
   Nālum kalantuṉakku nāṉ taruvēṉ
   Kōlañcey tuṅkakkarimukattut tūmaṇiyē nīyeṉakku
   Caṅkat tamiḻ mūṉṟum tā
   'My Lord, my gem, you the elephant-headed one, I shall offer you a mixture of milk, cereals, honey and the juice of jaggery; give me the best of the three Tamils (*iyal* 'poetry', *icai* 'music' and *nāṭakam* 'drama')'. The verse is attributed to Avvaiyār, considered to be a post-Caṅkam poetess of the Tamil country. According to oral tradition, she was at the prime of her youth when she wanted to renounce worldly life and take to social service. With the blessings of Piḷḷaiyār (i.e., Gaṇapati), she is said to have attained senility in order to foster her service without any hindrance because it was believed 'beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold'.
3. Vighnarāja and Vighneśvara are among the 100 (*aṣṭottaram*) epithets of the Lord. Y. Krishan, Evolution of Gaṇeśa, *East and West*, 44:2-4, pp. 293-314.

4. The form is noted in the *Kumāratantra*, an āgamic work bearing on the rituals, festivals and iconography of Kumara or Skanda. See Raju Kalidos, *Temple Cars of Medieval Tamiḻaham*, p. 128.
5. *Viṇāyakar Purāṇam* in Tamil, retold by R. Sarasvati, Madras 1988, pp. 62-81. The incident is also noted in the poems of Aruṇakirinātar, a devotee of Lord Murukaṉ of the 18th century A.D. The verse runs as follows: *Muppuram eri ceyta accivaṉuṟai ratam accatu poṭi ceyta* ... 'you broke the axle of the chariot in which Śiva, the destroyer of Tripura, was moving'.
6. *Kanta Purāṇam*, 6. *Dakṣa-kāṇṭam*, 13, *Vaḷḷiyammai tirumaṇap-paṭalam*.
7. According to the Tamil *Kanta Purāṇam* (1. *Uṟpatti-kāṇḍam*, 11.*Viṭaipeṟu-paṭalam*) Devasenā and Vaḷḷi were the daughters of Viṣṇu, called Amutavaḷḷi and Cuntari. Amutavalli was reborn as daughter of Indra and wedded to Kumāra. Cuntari incarnated as a daughter of the hill chief and married Murukaṉ.
8. For an elaboration of the idea of *vāmācāra* see Raju Kalidos, "*Vāmācāra*-Viṣṇu in Hindu Iconography: A Probe in Sociological Values", *East and West*, 44:24, 1994, pp. 275-91. Paper presented in the International Conference, Asian Research Service, Hong Kong 1988.
9. The hero of *Cilappatikāram*, Kōvalaṉ, praises the beauty of his beloved wife using several literary metaphors like 'pearl of the right side warp', 'sugarcane juice', 'honey', 'gem of the hill country', 'music of the harp', 'ambrosia of the seas' and so on. The phrase *valampuri muttu* (*Cilappatikāram* I:2:73-79) is used in the context.
10. See Chap. I for an elaborate account. Murukaṉ's status is that of a *nigrahamūrti*, one who punishes evilmongers. The *Kuṟuntokai* (v. 87) says,
    Maṉṟa marāatta pēemurti kaṭavuḷ
    Koṭiyōrt teṟūalm eṉpa yāvatum
    'That God (i.e., Murukaṉ) who resides in the tree (i.e., *kaṭampu*) at the *maṉṟam* (the temple) creates consternation (among the evil) and punishes those who follow the wicked ways.'
11. Strangely enough, the Tamil *Kanta Purāṇam* describes Murukan's wedding with Devasenā first, thus assigning the status of first wife, and then that of Vaḷḷi. But, in the Tamil country, Devasenā is the second. The *Kumāratantra* speaks of Vaḷḷikalyāṇasundaramūrti or Vaḷḷipariṇayamūrti and not of Devasenā. See Raju Kalidos, *Temple Cars of Medieval Tamiḻaham*, p. 128.
12. There is an ancient Tamil poem (*Puṟanāṉūṟu*, v. 163) which praises the virtues of the educated. According to the poem age is not important but education and wordly wisdom. Even if one is very young, if educated, he will receive all honours from the society.
13. *Kanda Purāṇam*, 1. *Uṟpattik-kāṇṭam*, 10. *Ayaṉciṟaiceypaṭalam*.
14. The myth is associated with Svāmimalai in Tañcāvūr district, one among the six centres of the Murukaṉ cult. Murukaṉ in the form is called *Takappaṉcuvāmi* 'Father's teacher' or Gurumūrti 'the Lord teacher', Dakṣināmūrtī and thus a professor's professor.
15. Siddhi and Buddhi according to the *Viṇāyakar Purāṇam* (episode No. 14) were the mind-born daughters of Brahmā, given in marriage to the Lord.
16. The verse forms part of *Taṉippāṭaltiraṭṭu* (collection of misellaneous poems) in Tamil literature.

Conclusion

There are two definitive channels of the Gaṇapati and Skanda imagery and cult in Indian tradition. One is rooted in the North and the other the South. Both these channels find a merger by about the 4th-5th century A.D. This process of syncreticism is in tune with developments in the cult history of other sects such as Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and Śāktam. The Vedic Rudra and Sanskritic Devī find an union with the Tamil Civaṉ (Śiva) and Koṟṟavai by about the same time. Similarly, minor deities such as the *dikpālakas* and higher gods like Brahmā and Viṣṇu find their way into the cultural milieu of the South. The *bhakti* cult, which has its origin in the North, moved into the Tamil plains by about the 6th century A.D. and had a tremendous impact ever the transformation of religious history. Ideas of image-making with the use of stone also came to the South, especially Tamil Nadu, by about the 6th century A.D. (or even earlier if the Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi cave could be assigned to the 5th century), and effected great changes. Gods of North Indian lineage and South Indian origin found chances for a mingling. Gaṇapati and Skanda do not operate in an isolated world but form part of a bigger movement, which historians call 'Aryanisation' or what recently sociologists call 'Sanskritization'. Cultures typical of the North and South had united in such a way that it is difficult to disentangle the native warp from the foreign woof in case of certain cults such as Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. In respect of Gaṇapati and Skanda the case is not that complicated. Śiva, Viṣṇu, Devī, Varuṇa (T. Varuṇaṉ) and Indra (T. Vēntaṉ) had an interaction with the Tamil society at a relatively ancient period, maybe the early centuries of the Christian era or even earlier. But Skanda and Gaṇapati were the last in the train to move into the Tamil country. It is easy to identify the native elements since literary and archaeological evidences are crystal-clear. It is not difficult to point out the channels of interaction and the process of syncreticism.

The genesis of the concept in respect of both the deities is traced back to a relatively ancient period but definitive sources in the form of cult images are forthcoming from about the first century of the Christian era. The Nāgārjunakoṇḍa temple and the Mathura museum specimen of the Kuṣāṇa time lay the foundations of a new era for the cult of Skanda. Scholars are of view that the cult was prehistoric and certain artefacts like *vēl* (*śakti*) are found among the very ancient layer of Indian culture. The literary productions of the Gupta age (e.g. Kālidāsa's *Kumārasaṁbhava*) and the artistic remains at Udayagiri (Cave III) open a new age and pave the way for the solid foundations of the early medieval period. Then comes Jogeśvarī, the "missing link" between the Vākāṭakas and the Cāḷukyas. It is during this period, by about the 5th century A.D., that the cult of Gaṇapati stretches his hands into the Far South and establishes its stronghold at Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi.

Under the Cāḷukyas the imagery of Gaṇapati and Skanda attain maturity in the Deccan. Elephanta, Ellora, Badāmī, Paṭṭadakkal, Aihole, the Kṛṣṇā basin and Bhairavakoṇḍa are seats, which nurtured the popularity of both the cults. In the Far South, Māmallapuram, Kāñcīpuram, Tiruccirāppaḷḷi, Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, Āṉaimalai, Tirumalai, Kaḻukumalai and Ṭirumalaipuram are the important centres. Totally 125 images of Gaṇapati and 64 of Skanda are traceable. Though there was no prolific output from the iconographical point of view, the rudiments of the forms in seated and standing aspects are found present. Mythology kept pace and went ahead of iconographical developments since we do not find rapport between the two. To cite an example, though Skanda is associated with destruction of *asuras* like Cūraṉ and Tāraka no visual imagery illustrating these forms is known to exist. The ceiling panel in the Ucchimallīguḍi at Aihole is an exception but it could not be identified properly.

An important aspect of the iconographs in respect of both Gaṇapati and Skanda is that they still constitute members of Śaivite or Śākta family groups. Some appear as oriented to the Mother Superior also. Good examples are Badāmī I and Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam north. Either of them may also appear as linked with the Mother. Examples are Cave XXI of Ellora (Skanda) and Cave XVII of Ellora (Gaṇapati). At times both appear face to face with each other. Good examples are Caves XV and XXII of Ellora. Gaṇapati's cult status stands at the acme of development in the Upper Deccan wherein not less than six instances of images placed in *garbhagṛha* appear. Skanda's place in the Far South is unique because in not less than three cave temples he occupies the *garbhagṛha*. Gaṇapati's absence in the Far South and Skanda's absence in the Deccan as cult images, appearing in *garbhagṛhas*, are indeed enigmatic. We have references to *aṟuvakaiccamayam* (Skt. *ṣaṇmatas*) in Tamil and the complex of cave temples with five or seven cellae, which means one among them should have been meant for Gaṇapati and or Skanda. But the absence of archaeological evidences by way of plastic images is a confusing phenomenon. This might lead to the generalization that the cult of Gaṇapati in the Far South and that of Skanda in the Deccan had not yet crystallised. Later medieval developments in respect of both the cults would guide to generalization that the cult of Gaṇapati as Gāṇapatya should have migrated to the Far South from the Deccan and that of Skanda as Kaumāra from the Far South to the Deccan.

There is reason to believe that the Nāgārjunakoṇḍa tradition of the Skanda cult should have had its share in the development of Skanda imagery and cult in the Deccan. But solid evidences are found only in the Far South.

The iconographical variables being very few in number, it is difficult to trace the regional developments. Seated Gaṇapati is from the North and this movement starts its perigrination from Udayagiri via Jogeśvarī to Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi. *Sthānaka* Gaṇapati has its origin in coastal Karṇāṭaka (Gokarṇa) and moves towards Tiruchirāppaḷḷi. Dancing Gaṇapati is from Alampūr and is mostly concentrated in the core Chāḷukyan zone of art with a possible exception at Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam. *Pañcamukha*-Gaṇapati is centred at Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, the only one of its type. The imagery of Skanda in the Upper Deccan is likely to have derived its inspiration from the Kuṣāṇa-Mathura school. Developments in the lower Deccan and the Kṛṣṇā basin may have their roots in the north had its own independent course and laid the foundations of epoch making creations in plastic arts. There is no parallel to the imagery of Skanda, imprinted on the walls of the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam (two caves), Kaḻukumalai, Āṉaimalai and Māmallapurm (Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa*) cave and monolithic temples.

Literary tradition in both Tamil and Sanskrit stands to the credit of Skanda while the imagery of Gaṇapati is hazy and cloudy. The pen-picture of Murukaṉ in ancient Tamil literature adds to our pan-Indian perspective of the theme. He was the presiding God of a *tiṇai* (topographical division of the country), called *kuṟiñci* (hills and the hilly regions) wherein the inhabitants were mostly hunters and forest folk. Their way of life depended on love and love-making. Murukaṉ as God of this land makes love to a dweller of the region, Vaḷḷi, who becomes his wife. Another important character of the Lord is that he topples a giant called Cūr or Cūraṉ (Skt. Sūrapadma). Nothing regarding the parentage of Murukaṉ appears in the early stratum of Tamil literature. Later by about the 4th century A.D. as a result of the ideas coming from the North, one among the Ten Idylls, called *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*, records the events leading to the birth of Kumāra-Murukaṉ and his marriage with Devasenā. He is now viewed as a God with six heads and twelve arms. Philosophical speculations regarding the nature and attributes of Murukaṉ attain a definitive shape. From this root the myth of Murukaṉ goes on elaborating further till a melting point is reached by about the 15th century A.D. through the *Kanta Purāṇam*.

By about the 8th century A.D. the cult of Murukaṉ seems to have scaled the peaks of development. This is because of the following factors: (1) presence of a handful of iconographical typologies, (2) images found housed in *garbhagṛhas*, and (3) the supporting literary evidences. But the case of Gaṇapati is not like that. Though he occupies the *garbhagṛha* in Upper Deccan nothing of the type is to be found in the Lower Deccan and the Far South. The Gaṇapati cult is likely to have radiated its influence from Jogeśvarī in two directions: (1) towards coastal and the core Cāḷukyan country and (2) the Pāṇḍya country. It is from the Pāṇḍya country that the cult is likely to have percolated into the Putukkōṭṭai region and the Pallava country.

At this juncture it is important to review the concept of Vātāpi-Gaṇapati which has obsessed the thoughts of traditional Tamil scholars. Excluding the vague archaeological evidences found in the Lower Śivālaya at Badāmī, no solid proof of an independent cult of Gaṇapati is traceable in the Cāḷukyan metropolis. Had Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ been responsible for the introduction of the cult in the Tamil country, brought from Vātāpi (Badāmī), he should have carved few images in the major area of his artistic experiment at Māmallapuram. Do we find atleast a single instance of Gaṇapati in any of the cave temples there. If so, how are we to vindicate the notion, 'Vātāpi-Gaṇapati'? when evidences are against such a proposition. The fact is that the Gaṇapati cult and iconography find their way into the Tamil country by way of Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi in the Pāṇḍinādu.

We may slightly deviate and place an important argument. Scholars like K.R. Srinivasan (1964 and 1971), basing on the Maṇṭakappaṭṭu inscription, think that Maṇṭakappaṭṭu is the earliest cave temple ever founded in the Tamil country. The concerned inscription says nothing about a pioneering cave temple ever excavated by Vichitrachitta. It simply states that the king used stone, avoiding perishable materials like wood, brick and mortar. On the other hand earlier evidences in literature, the *Cilappatikāram*, for example, speak of an image of the Goddess of Chastity made out of a stone brought from the North (i.e., the Himālayas). This literature is dated in the 5th century A.D. Furthermore, the Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi inscription, dated in the 5th century A.D., would reveal the fact that the concerned cave temple with its images of Gaṇapati *et al* should be earlier than Maṇṭakappaṭṭu. Many of the cave temples in and around Putukkōṭṭai (e.g., Pirāṉmalai, Kuṉṉaṇṭārkōvil, Tirukkōlakkuṭi and Tirumeyyam) are of an archaic pattern and likely to be contemporaneous with Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi. This is to prove the cave temple tradition in the deep south of peninsular India is much older than Maṇṭakappaṭṭu. The mysteries behind the curtain of art history has to be removed. When such an historical account is available, the factors behind the cults of Gaṇapati and Skanda will be solved and their real values brought to the limelight.

ANNEXURE I

Vātapi-Gaṇapati*

The traditional view among Tamil scholars is that the cult of Gaṇapati and his images were deported to the Tamil country by Parañcōti, called Ciṟuttoṇṭar in the *Periya Purāṇam* of Cēkkiḻār, who was *senāpati* of the army of Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ I (c. A.D. 630-68). It is believed that he led the forces against Pulakeśi II (A.D. 608/641-42) and avenged the defeat of his Emperor's father, i.e., Mahēndravarmaṉ I, during the previous regime. It is what could be the case according to Cēkkiḻār, author of *Periya Purāṇam* (*c.* 12th century A.D.).[1] Parañcōti after causing the great catastrophe at Vātāpai (m. Badāmī in Bijāpūr district, Karṇāṭaka) is said to have retired to the countryside and spent the rest of his life as a devout Śaiva saint at Tirucceṅkāṭṭaṅkuṭi. The temple for Śiva at Tirucceṅkāṭṭaṅkuṭi to this day is known as Gaṇapatīśvara (*supra* Chap I, cf. the Nāyaṉmār who call the place Kaṇapatīccaram), i.e., the Īśvaram 'temple of Īśvara-Śiva' wherein Gaṇapati is more important than the Lord Śiva Himself or may be that the temple was instituted by Gaṇapati. The question is: why the temple is called Gaṇapatīśvaram? and the traditional belief among Tamil scholars is that it was so because the Gaṇapati image, brought by Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ's war general, was for the first time established there.[2] In early Tamil literature, for example Caṅkam, there is no clear reference to Gaṇapati among the pantheon of gods known to the then society. Some scholars very strongly advocate the hypothesis that it was under Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ the cult of Gaṇapati was inducted into the Tamil country by Parañcōti from Badāmī. The fact is further confirmed by a *kīrtaṇa* of Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar (18th-19th century A.D.)[3] which begins with the phrase, *vātāpigaṇapatim bhajem* ..., usually sung at the commencement of any musical recital in Tamil Nadu as an invocation. The phrase, Vātāpi-Gaṇapati, is a further support to the traditional view.

The present article makes an attempt to examine the historicity of the concept with due reference to the archaeological evidence of the age, i.e., the 7th century A.D.,[4] from the time of Mahēndravarmaṉ I to Rājasiṁha Pallava, especially those of the Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ I phase. We may for a comparative analysis take into account monuments of an early period from other parts of peninsular India, for example Udayagiri (Central India) and Jogeśvari (Western India) to trace the evolution of Gaṇapati imagery as found in the temples of the age. The Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ phase in the art history of Tamil Nadu is by the large mostly concerned with rock-cut temples. Samples drawn from the rock-cut cave or monolithic temples will have to be taken into serious account for the present study.

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The defeat of Pulakeśi II by Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ I is of great significance in the political and cultural history of South India. Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ not only defeated Pulakeśi but also practically occupied the Cāḷukyan capital for nearly two decades from A.D. 642 to 662. Scholars from Karṇāṭaka themselves speak of a void in the history of Badāmī for about two decades (Desai 1981: 102-3). It gave scope to some American scholars (Tarr 1970: 81-82) to make a case either for or against the Pallava elements on Cāḷukyan caves in Badāmī. The Pallavas having occupied the Cāḷukyan metropolis for two decades should have committed themselves to some kind of constructive work (Goetz 1960: 125, Kalidos *et al.*, 1990: 32-2). If the value of opinion among art historians could be justified, at the outset of the argument itself we may reject the traditional opinion among scholars that the Pallavas found something new, i.e., Gaṇapati, in the Cāḷukyan country, and so they brought him here. Logically, it is a wrong hypothesis. The traditional view gained momentum at a time when the Tamil scholars themselves did not know that the Pallavas had something to do with the excavation of the cave temples in Badāmī. Now, let us forget the argument. We need more evidences to establish the crux of the matter. We may emphasise because even the question relating to Pallava influence on the Paṭṭadakkal temples is questioned by scholars from Karṇāṭaka though there are epigraphical[5] and iconographical evidences to support the notion (Kalidos 1988: 415-17).[6]

It is better to approach the problem from the point of reliable archaeological sources than the hazy historical generalizations, discussed in the previous section of the article. If Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ or as for the matter Parañcōti is to be treated as the author of the introduction of the Gaṇapati cult from Badāmī, more images of the said God should be found in the temples of early Cāḷukyas and early Pallavas that could be dated since A.D. 600 to 700. From the cult point of view, mere presence of images may not do, they should also occupy a significant place within the format of a temple and its iconographic programme (e.g. placement in *garbhagṛha*). The question is: do we find any such evidence?

There are three important caves of solid dimension in Badāmī on the slopes of the southern hill. We do find two images of Gaṇapati in Cave I which appear integral units of bigger illustrations rather than independently. Both are miniatures when compared with other iconographical subjects in the same cave. In one Gaṇapati attends on Mahiṣāsuramardinī. It is in a small chapel to the left side of the cave. Adjoining the little chapel, on a rocky projection there is a *bas relief*[7] of Naṭarāja whose troupe includes a miniature of Gaṇapati who is found unusually standing or more contexually dancing.[8] In the structural temples of Badāmī, those found on the cliffs of the temples of the northern hill (viz., Malagiṭṭi, Lower and Upper Śivālayas)[9] or as for the matter in the temples found around the Bhūtanātha water reservoir, no independent image of Gaṇapati appears. In fact few stray collections are present in the Badāmī site museum. These are likely to be post-Pulakeśi period works.

Another important point among the Badāmī group of monuments is that in one of the minor excavations, near the Bhūtanātha temple, there is a tiny cave in which Gaṇapati and Mahiṣāsuramardini appear on either side of the *garbhagṛha*, the type of alignment that is mostly found in Ellora (Caves XVI, XVII) and Udayagiri. Spoken with reference to the importance attached to Gaṇapati, it is more significant than the images of Gaṇapati found in Cave I of Badāmī. The carvings here are of crude workmanship and so they appear to be either stray works of a later period, undertaken by artists, not belonging to an organised guild. The images in the case could not be taken into serious account in a review of the problem under investigation.

In case there is reason to consider these early Cāḷukyan works, then there is scope to argue that what is found in the main cave group (i.e. the three big caves of Badāmī) is a totally different cultural denomination, the basis of the demarcation being the importance attached to Gaṇapati. Then, it may suggest that the Pallavas had nothing to do with the main caves in Badāmī who having known nothing about Gaṇapati disregarded the pre-eminence that should be attached to the elephant-God but admitted him in their pantheon with lesser importance. It might be noted here that the kind of link between Gaṇapati-Mahiṣāsuramardinī, located at the *façade* level of the caves, was never a factor to reckon with in the art of the Pallavas.[10]

Explorations in the Pallava group of monuments have proved that in none of the caves any image of Gaṇapati appears as in Udayagiri and Ellora. In one of the early Pallava caves Gaṇapati is found. It is in Vallam, the Lord appears at the *façade* level (Srinivasan 1964: 61-4) but oriented towards Jyeṣṭhādevī[11] and not Mahiṣāsuramardinī. In Māmallapuram, which according to K.R. Srinivasan (1964) was the major field of activity for Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ, no image of Gaṇapati is found. The structural temples of Kāñcīpuram, e.g., the Kailāsanātha and few others, have representations of Gaṇapati but not in a way that their placement could be significant to add any kind of importance. The point here is even in the later stage of development the Gaṇapati imagery is not deep rooted in the cultural network of the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam region and also the Cōḻa country wherein Pallava monuments are found.

The two Tiruccirāppaḷḷi caves deserve a worthy note in the regard. The upper Pallava cave contrasts strikingly with the lower Pāṇḍya (Srinivasan 1971: 56-7). Only in the lower cave Gaṇapati appears in standing aspect, an unique form that we come across among the early medieval Gaṇapati images, aligned with Mahiṣāsuramardinī. These images appear on the extremity of the back wall of the cave but could by all means be compared with the Udayagiri and Ellora models. Starting with Tiruccirāppaḷḷi, Gaṇapati appears in many of the Pāṇḍyan caves in the Putukkōṭṭai and the core Pāṇḍimaṇḍalam region. It is in contrast with our Pallava experience. It may be generalised that it is in the Pāṇḍināḍu zone that Gaṇapati had deep roots.

Besides Tiruccirāppaḷḷi, the following are centres of Gaṇapati imagery in the Pāṇḍya country: Kuṭumiyāmalai, Kuṉṟāṇṭārkōyil, Makipālaṉpaṭṭi, Tirukkōlakkuṭi, Malaiyakkōyil, Tirukōkarṇam, Malaiyaṭippaṭṭi, Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi, Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi, Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, Mūvaraiveṉṟāṉ, Tirumalaipuram and Vīraśikhāmaṇi. The numerical concentration in itself is a good evidence in proof of Pāṇḍya origin of Gaṇapati cult in Tamil Nadu. In most cases the images are seated, excepting Tiruccirāppaḷḷi. The latter is indicative of the trends in the development of the form. In fact at Badāmī there is a miniature carving of *sthānaka*- Gaṇapati and two other miniatures in Ellora (Rāmeśvara XXI) and Aihole. The Tiruccirāppaḷḷi life size image is a marvel within the sphere of early medieval art.[12] It is interesting to note that there are miniatures of *Nāṭya* and Pañcamukha Gaṇapati in the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam caves. These point out the fact that in the Pāṇḍyan zone of art Gaṇapati had undergone spectacular changes. They may be later interpolations but to find the pot-bellied *lambodara* dancing and five-faced in the early medieval caves is a fascinating experience.

The Pāṇḍyan images of Gaṇapati appear in various postures. He is independent in many of them, appearing on a boulder, close to the main cave. Examples are many, they being Kuṭumiyāmalai, Makipālaṉpaṭṭi, Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam (south) and Vīraśikhāmaṇi. He is aligned with Caṇḍikeśvara in the Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi cave. The type gets popularised in the Bhairavakoṇḍa caves in the Peṉṉār basin and derives its inscription from Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi (see Soundararajan 1981: 298-312). Gaṇapati is associated with the Sapta Mātṛkas in the Malaiyaṭipaṭṭi and Tirukōkarṇam caves. The Lord receives a kind of *garbhagṛha* (?) status in the Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi and Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam (north) caves. It is a rare phenomenon that is to be found only in the Upper Deccan in places like Jogeśvarī, Ellora and Auraṅgābād. The Tirukōkarṇam cave accommodates Gaṇapati and Gaṅgādhara, face to face with each other. In the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam (north) cave, the Lord attends on Devī along with Skanda in a pattern akin to Cave I of Badāmī.

From the above facts and figures what could be specified is that different modes of representaṭion for Gaṇapati in Tamil Nadu, especially Pāṇḍināḍu, are found. It means the cult had its deep roots in the extreme south rather than Toṇḍaināḍu, the core Pallava country. It has been pointed out that the Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi cave is the earliest in point of time, datable to the 5th century A.D., to house an mage of Gaṇapati (Nagaswamy 1964: 265-81). It is substantiated by the evidence provided by an archaic inscription in Tamil-Brahmi character. The generalization is based on palaeographical grounds. The Udayagiri caves are of the Gupta lineage and dated in the 5th century A.D. Walter Spink (n. d.: 1-

35) considers the Jogeśvarī cave as a "missing link" between the Vākāṭaka and the Cāḷukyan phase of rock-cut activity. Judging from the above arguments, three important stages of development in the Gaṇapati cult of South India may be specified as proved by the cave temple art. In the order of chronological priority, they are: (1) Udayagiri, (2) Jogeśvarī, and (3) Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi. In the extreme south, the earliest imprints of Gaṇapati imagery exist in the Pāṇḍya country.

Now, it is possible to generalise that the earliest Gaṇapati cult has its base in Jogeśvarī which draws inspiration from Udayagiri in Central India. From Jogeśvarī the cult radiated its influence in two directions: (1) towards coastal Karṇāṭaka (Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji) and (2) Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi. From Jogeśvarī, the scene of activity shifts to the Pāṇḍya country as far as Tamil Nadu is concerned. There is no meaning in saying that the cult came from Badāmī through the initiatives taken by Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ and Parañcōti. We not only lack archaeological evidences to establish the hypothesis but also fall short of historical documentation. Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar could not be taken into serious account since he belongs to the 18th-19th century A.D. The same is the case with Cēkkiḻār who is assigned to the12th century A.D. Again, there is no solid proof even in the writing of Cēkkiḻār to ascertain the truth of Gaṇapati images brought from Vātāpi. He speaks of treasures, elephants and horses but not any sculptural trophy (see n. 1).[13] In a retrospective analysis what is to be concluded is that the traditional belief among ardent Tamil scholars is based on some misconception. The historical and archaeological remains stand to justify the thesis that the concept of Vātāpi-Gaṇapati is an anachronism and a misnomer.

REFERENCES

1. The text calls the Nāyaṉār, Parañcōti, who was settled at Ceṅkāṭṭaṅkuṭi (Tirucceṅkāṭṭaṅkuṭi in the Tañcāvūr district). He is said to have battered the Cāḷukyan capital, Vātāvi (Skt. Vātābhi), and brought a heavy booty which included several kinds of gems, rich treasures, elephants, horses and other items.
   To quote:
   Maṉṉavarkkut taṇṭupōy vaṭapulattu vātāvit toṉṉakaran tukaḷākat tuḷaineṭuṅkai varaikyutattup paṉmaṇiyum nitikkuvaiyum pakaṭṭiṉamum parittokaiyum iṉṉaṉa eṉṉuḷakavarntē ikalaracaṉ muṉkoṇarntār ... (*Periya Purāṇam*, 26 *Ciṛuttoṇḍa Nāyaṉār Purāṇam*, v. 6).
2. The Tirucceṅkāṭṭaṅkuṭi temple is a later structure. It does not fall under the list of Pallava structural temples. The image of Gaṇapati found therein is post-Cōḷa and stylistically has nothing to do with Pallava or even Cōḷa.
3. Muttusvāmi Dikṣitar was one among the Trinity of great savants of South Indian musical tradition. The other two were Saint Tyāgarāja and Syāma Sāstri. They were patronised by the Marāṭha kings of Tañcāvūr in the 18th-19th centuries A.D.
4. The problem has been aproached from the literary point of view by M. Arunachalam whose argument is that there is no literary evidence to substantiate the notion. Vātāpi-Gaṇapati. I

saw the article recently and found it very interesting mainly because of the fact that both of us are sailing in the same boat. Both the articles supplement each other and serve to reject the much obsessed notion, Vātāpi-Gaṇapati. See M. Arunachalam in Nagasamy's *South Indian Studies*.

5. For a detailed examination of the data see S. Rajasekhara, "Pallava-Chalukya Interaction in Art and Architecture", *Cave Temples of South India: Interregional Affinities and Intraregional Variations*, ed., Raju Kalidos, Thanjavur, 1990 (MS).
6. Tartakov and Dehejia (1984: 287-344) have proved the unmistakable affinity of Mahiṣāsuramardinī in Paṭṭadakkal with the Pallava original in the Mahiṣāsuramardinī-*maṇḍapa* at Māmallapuram. See also Raju Kalidos, "Pallava Elements in Chāḷukyan and Rāṣṭrakūṭa Art",*The Bounteous Tree : Treasures in Indian Art and Culture*, eds. K.K.Chakravarty and O.P. Misra, pp.318-24.
7. It strikingly compares with the statement in *Tēvāram* (see Chap. I). Similar motifs appear in the Aihole and Elephanta caves.
8. In the Rāvulaphaḍi cave at Aihole both Gaṇapati and Skanda attend on Naṭarāja in addition to the Sapta Mātṛkas. Both are miniatures.
9. K.V. Soundararajan and A. Sundara consider the Lower Śivālaya, a temple for Gaṇapati with reference to the *pīṭha* that falls in line with the Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji pedestals upon which images of Gaṇapati appear. K.V.S. speaks of a reference in *Tēvāram* to establish Parañjōti's connections with a Gaṇapati temple of Tiruccenkāṭṭankuḍi. There is no such hymn in *Tēvāram*.
10. The following types appear in Tamil Nadu:
    (i) Gaṇapati and Jyeṣṭhādevī - Vallam I
    (ii) Gaṇapati and Gajalakṣmī - Kailāsanātha, Kāñcīpuram
    (iii) Gaṇapati and Devī (may be Mahiṣāsuramardinī since the area meant for the head of *mahiṣa* is incomplete) - Tiruccirāppaḷḷi lower cave.
    (iv) Gaṇapati and Caṇḍikeśvara - Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi
    (v) Gaṇapati and Gaṅgādharamūrti - Tirukōkarṇam
    (vi) Gaṇapati and Naṭarāja-Tirumalaipuram.
11. Supposed to be the elder sister of Lakṣmī who was considered to be an inauspicious messenger of illuck.
12. The earliest *sthānaka* images are from coastal Karṇāṭaka, the centres being Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji. They are assigned to very early dates, anterior to the Udayagiri Caves but may be 5th-6th century A.D.
13. The cited verse uses the word *et cetera* added to the list of spoils from Badāmī, brought by the invading army. It is a vague term and definitely Gaṇapati could not go under *et cetera*.

ANNEXURE II

Recent Finds

R.K.K. Rajarajan has undertaken a survey of monuments in the Pāṇḍya country. He has brought to light several places and some rare images. A synoptic account of these finds is presented hereunder. K.R. Srinivasan *(Temples of South India)* and C. Sivaramamurti *(Kalukumalai...)* were not a aware of many of these caves. Rajarajan has taken hints for his study from a Tamil book, written by C. Rajavel and A.K. Seshadri *(Tamilnāṭṭu Kuṭaivaraik Kōyilkaḷ* 'Cave Temples of Tamil Nadu', December 2000*)*. As is the case with most Tamil books, it suffers from serious methodological lapses but presents a fairly good documentation. Taking clue from the book, Rajarajan has done a good paper on these neglected caves of the Pāṇḍyan zone.

At Tiruveḷḷarai there is a cave temple with an adjunct. It consists of opposing *garbhagṛhas* as found in the Tirucci lower cave, meant for Śiva and Viṣṇu. The *koṣṭhas* in the cave house images of Brahmā, Murukaṉ, Sūrya, Gaṇapati and Durgā. Nearby, there is another rock-cut temple, called Svetagiri. Its *koṣṭhas* provide for images of Viṣṇu and Gaṇapati.

Tiruppaññiḻi, 18 kms from Tirucci, is a unique cave. It houses an image of Somāskanda in its cella. Next to Māmallapuram and Kañci, it is the only place south of the Kāviri to provide for Somāskanda. Devī and Murukaṉ are present in the image.

Varicciyūr is a place on the way from Maturai to Śivagaṅgā. There are four mini-excavations. The east-facing cave houses an image of Gaṇapati on the rock outside. There is a carving of Nandi, both incomplete. Away from the cave, there is another one, called Nīlakaṇṭha. On its right side, an image of *valampuri*-Gaṇapati is carved. The fourth cave on its back wall houses images of Vīrabhadra and the Mātṛkas. The Mātṛkas are six. Vīrabhadra is seated and behind him Nandi appears. The six Mātṛkas are decorated with *kiriṭamakuṭas* and *kuccabandhas*. As in the Tirukōkarṇam cave, they are *dvibhuja.* The right is in *abhaya* and left rested on thigh. Very interestingly, apart from Varāhī, Nṛsiṁhī appears. It is the only evidence of Nṛsiṁhī appearing in early medieval art.

On the beach at Tiruccentūr in the Far South, there is a Vijayanagara-Nāyaka temple for Murukaṉ, one among the *aṟupaṭaivīṭus* 'six barracks' of the warrior-god. Nearby, there is a much-dilapidated cave in *sāndhāra* pattern, the only one of its type in Tamil Nadu. It houses no images and was perhaps originally dedicated to Murukaṉ as is the case with Āṉaimalai.

There is a cave temple at Kaṅkaikoṇṭāṉ on the way from Tirunelvēli to Cīvalappēri. As is the with the Vallam cave, it houses images of Gaṇapati, Murukaṉ (Pl. XXVIII) and Jyeṣṭhā in its *façade*. The rock outside houses a ruined Gaṇapati (Pl. XXIX).

Another cave temple at Vāṭikoṇṭāṉ close to Caṅkaraṉkōyil, houses an image of Viṣṇu in its cella. One of the pillars in the *maṇḍapa* provides the space for Gajalakṣmī. Gajalakṣmī appearing on a pillar is a novel idiom.

Āṇṭiccippārai, near Tirunelvēli, is an unfinished cave. It has finished *koṣṭhas* at the *façade* level. These house images of Gaṇapati and Jyeṣṭhā (*supra* Kaṅkaikoṇṭāṉ).

Cevilippaṭṭi is on the way from Śivakāśi to Tiruvēṅkaṭam, south of Maturai. Earlier reported by C. Sivramamūrti in his "Naṭarāja", his emblem in a hand (the *puṣtaka* called *ḍamarū* by C.S.) led to lot of commotion, created by local writers. The cave houses images of Śiva-Naṭarāja, Viṣṇu and a two-armed Gaṇapati. The posture of the Dancer in the image is very strange, not traced in other centers.

Araḷippaṭṭi is a village, close to Ciṅkampuṇari, near Putukkōṭṭai. It is a unique cave because it houses a *mukha*-Liṅga, the only one of its type in Tamil Nadu. During the early phase, *mukha* -Liṅgas appear in the North, e.g. Gupta-Udayagiri with an *ekamukha*-Liṅga.

K.R. Srinivasan earlier reports Tēvarmalai with no details. It lies on the Putukkōṭṭai-Poṉṉamarāvati way, near Pēṟaiyūr. Its niches house images of Gaṇapati and Caṇḍikeśvara as in the Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi and Bhairavakoṇḍa caves.There are few images of *ṛṣis* and *bhaktas*.

Remarks:

These images could not be taken into account in the statistical analysis presented in the foregoing account. We may add that of the various iconographical typologies, Gaṇapati tops the list with eight occurrences. Viṣṇu and Jyeṣṭhā appear twice. The single occurrences are Brahmā, Murukaṉ, Sūrya, Durgā, Somāskanda, the Mātṛkas, Nṛsiṁhī, Gajalakṣmī, Śiva-Naṭarāja, Caṇḍikeśvara and above all *Mukha*-Liṅga. Nṛsiṁhī and *Mukha*-Liṅga are singularly unique representations.

ANNEXURE III

Mini-Masterpieces of Aihole

The present annexure is an afterthought, added while finalizing the proof. The author and R.K.K. Rajarajan have visited the metropolitan zone of Cāḻukyan art twice during the past five years. We visited the nooks and corners of the village and covered almost all the surviving temples. A direct outcome was a small article (Portrait of Historical Facts) written at Aihole itself and posted to the *Deccan Herald* (24 August 2001), published in its Friday Spectrum. In this article, it is proposed that Pulakeśi was a man of parts, noted for his nobility of character whereas in modern Tamil fiction in the celluloid medium he is portrayed a villain and *kāpālika.* The patronage, that he extended to the Jain poet, Ravikīrti, would prove that he was not either a Śaiva or Vaiṣṇava bigot. Another article sent to the *South Asian Studies* is still pending publication. It deals with the symbolism of *pūrṇakuṁbha* mofis that abound in the temples of Aihole (Pt. II, Pl. XLII), especially Ucchimalli-*guḍi*, Lad Khan group and Rāmaliṅga *devasthānam.* There is internal evidence in these illustrations to establish the fact that it represents the fertility symbol, the cosmic seed that is packed in these *ghaṭas* (cf. the mythology of Kuṁbhakoṇam). R.K.K. Rajarajan photographed several of the miniature sculputres that decorate the various *aṅgas* of the temples. The following account presents a brief account of the miniatures, irrespective of their sectarian lineage.

The Cāḻukyan emperor, Pulakeśi II, is presumably present in two images publshed in the *Deccan Herald (supra)* (Pl. XXXV. 1). His image appears in the Jain cave temple at the other end of the hill, away from the Meghūti temple. The images of Gaṇapati and Skanda, who follow the troupe of Śiva-Naṭarāja in the Rāvulaphaḍi cave temple, are already reported in this part of the volume (Pl. XXXV. 2-3). A small cave temple with a structural fitting is present on the left side as one moves downhill from the Meghūti temple. A deserted temple, it is fitted with Gajalakṣmī at the lintel with fine carvings on the wall of the threshold (Pl. XXXVI. 1). It is a typical Cāḻukyan idion in many of the temples at Aihole. A mini-cave adjunct is present on the left side of the Rāvulaphaḍi cave. A cella type, it houses the Liṅga (Pl. XXVI. 2). Several examples of these model shrines are found close to the Bhūtanātha temple in Badāmī.

A pillar in the *agramaṇḍapa* of the Lad Khan temple houses an interesting motif. It finds a four-handed male in *samapāda-sthānaka* mode, holding a flower in the upper right hand

and some illegible articles in other hands. Stark nude, his phallus is partly *ūrdhavarestas.* He is likely to be Viṣṇu (Pl. XXXVII. 1). I am no sure. Two ladies (Śrī and Bhū?) are nearby in sexually provocative postures. The maid on the right is touching the erect phallus of the god. The other lady is touching or manipulating her own vagina. Its feminine counterpart is present in the Ucchimalli-*guḍi.* Called Yoninilayā, the importance in the image is its orientation to the feminine principle *(yoni)*. The projection of the male *(liṅga)* is prominent in the present case. Normally in early medieval art, Lakulīśa appears in *ūrdhvarestas* aspect. The present image may be an example of Viṣṇu in such a posture.

The Mallikārjuna temple in which Naṭeśvarī finds a place on a pillar houses some interesting miniatures on the ceiling. One of these is an image of Kevala-Nṛsiṁha, seated in *mahārājalīlāsa* aspect (Pl. XXXVII. 2), holding the *śaṅkha* and *Cakra* in *parahastas.* Interestingly, the Lord is enigmatically smiling as we find him in cave III at Badāmī. Another image in a small temple nearby hoses Ādimūrti attended by Śrī and Bhū (Pl. XXXVII. 3). The Lord is seated in *mahārajālīlāsan.*

There are few interesting miniatures of Śiva-Naṭarāja in the Hucchapayya-*guḍi* and Chikki-*guḍi.* The dancing mode in all these cases is close to one another (Pl. XXXVIII. 1-3), lifting either the right or the left lef in *kuñcita* mode, thus representing *caturam.* Umā and other attendants are present.

The Lad Khan temple in its *agramaṇḍapa* accommodates few images that fail to appear in other temples. There are:

i) A zoomorphic Nandi and *bhūtagaṇa* (Pl. XXXIX. 2)

ii) Two fighting elephants (Pl. XXXIX. 3) and

iii) The Cāḷukyan royal Boar-emblem (Pl. XL. 1). The Gauri-*guḍi* in its *maṇḍapa* houses an interesting image of zoomorphic Nandi, seated, on a *yoni*-like pedestal (Pl. XXXIX. 1).

Step-wells are quite common in Aihole. We may find these close to the Durgā temple and the Ucchimalli-*guḍi.* The Ucchimalli-*guḍi* step-well on the top of its parapet provides for some miniature carvings (Pl. XL. 2). Step-wells appears rarely in the Pallava zone (e.g. Tiruveḷḷaṛai) but do not provide for any sculptural network. The Aihole temples are pioneers to the latter medieval step-wells in Gujarāt. The architectural and inconographical sophistication of the Gugarāti temples may not be present in Aihole at such an early date but these are the pioneers.

The present annexure is proof of the fact that much work has to be done on early medieval art. Whatever might be the diligence with which one works, several significant inconographical pieces are likely to evade an inquisitive attention. Even though we have followed a simple statistical method to find out the total number of images in a circle or in totality, it has its own limitations.

Glossary

abhaṅga	(an image) without any flexion, an erect image
āgama	a liturgical text which deals with the rules and regulations of rituals and festivals, at times also dealing with *lakṣaṇas* of icons
agni	'fire'
akṣamālā	rosary
añjalibandha	attitude of adoration, palms of both hands put together
aṇaṅku (T)	a divine spirit, either good or malivolous
antarāla	the narrow corridor linking the holy of the holies with the hall for devotees in a Hindu temple
ardhamaṇḍapa	the small pavilion which links the *antarāḷa* with the *mahāmaṇḍapa*
āṟu (T)	six
aṣṭa	eight
aṣṭottaram	100 epithets, usually in praise of a deity
āvāhana mudrā	a hand posture, symbolising invitation
bhadrapīṭha	an ordinary pedestal
bhakta	a devotee
bhakti	devotion, a movement in the history of India in which the approach to godhood was through a *bhakta's* devotion to a personal god
bhaṅga	flexion in images and icons; may be *eka* 'one', *dvi* 'two', *tri* 'three' and *ati* 'many'
bhuja	'hand'
brahmacāri	'bachelor'
camayam (T)	religion or cult
cannavīra	a cross belt, usually attributed to warriors (gods)
catur	four
cūr (T)	'fear'
daṇḍa	'staff'

danta	tusk
daśa	'ten'
dik	'direction'
dikpālaka	directional god
dvārapālaka	a gatekeeper
dvi	two
dvibhuja	two hands
eṭṭu (T)	'eight'
gaja	elephant
gajahasta	a dangling hand
gaṇa	a dwarf attendant
garbhagṛha	holy of the holies
ghaṇṭa	'bell'
guḍi (K)	'temple'
guṇa.	ethos
hāra	necklace
hasta	hand, posture of the hand
iṭampuri (T)	left warp, in the present context images of Gaṇapati with proboscis turned to the left
japa	'prayer'
japamālā	rosary
kaṭampu (T)	a tree, three types are called *veḷḷaikkaṭampu (Anthrocephalous indicus* A. Rich), *mañcakkaṭampu (Adina cordifolia* Hook.), and *kaṭampu (Viburnum hebanthum* W.A.); that which is connected with Murukaṉ is *ceṇkaṭampu* (*Bavingtonia acutangula*).
kaḻal (T)	anklet meant for a man
kaḷiṟu (T)	male elephant
kamaṇḍalū	water pot or pitcher, used by the anchorite
kaṉṉikādāna	a ritual in marriage by which the girl is given as a gift to the bridegroom
kaṇṭhahāra	a necklace tied very tightly
karaṇḍamakuṭa	a short crown
kari (T)	'elephant'
kaṭihasta	a hand posture, the hand placed on hip

kiṅkiṇi (T)	an anklet of bells tied to the legs of elephants
koṣṭha	a niche appearing on the *bhiṭṭi* (wall) section of the temple
kṛttika	the seven celestial mothers (of Kārttikeya)
kūḍu	an ornamental niche appearing on the cornice
kukkuṭa	'rooster'
kumāra	son
kurava (T)	hill folk, hunters
kuṟiñci (T)	one of the land divisions, the hill and hilly regions
lakṣaṇa	characteristic or distinguishing mark
laḍḍukam	a sweet
lalitāsana	a seated posture, both legs on pedestal with the palms facing each other
leṇa (H)	cave
mahārājalīlāsana	a seated posture with one leg rested on the pedestal and another suspended below
maṇḍapa	a pillared hall, pavilion
malar (T)	flower
mantra	a prayer, hymns meant for prayer
mālasthāna	a member of the pillar, appearing at the corner of the square section in the middle part
mayil (T)	'peacock'
mayūra	'peacock'
modaka	an eatable made of rice flour and jaggery
mudrā	a symbolic gesture of the hand
muruku (T)	beauty
muṣika	bandicoot
nāga	snake
nāṭya	dance
pādacaram	an ornament for the ankles
padma	lotus
padmapīṭha	lotus pedestal
pañca	five
pañcamūrti	five gods of the Śaivite family, consisting of Śiva, Devī, Gaṇapati, Kumāra and Caṇḍikeśvara

paraśu	battle-axe
parivāra	one of the several cloisters in a South Indian temple
parahasta	hands other than the frontal two (the original hands)
pati	Lord
pāśa	noose
piṭi (T)	female elephant
pūjā	ritual worship
purvahasta	the original two hands
ṛṣi	seer, sage
śakti	lance or spear
samabhaṅga	images without any flexion, erect ones
saṁbhava	birth or origin
ṣaṇmata	six religions, viz., Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, Śāktam (of Śakti), Gāṇapatyam (of Gaṇapati), Kaumāram (of Kumāra) and Sauram (of Sūrya)
sarpa	serpent
śikhi	peacock, its plumage
śirascakra	an ornamental disc, appearing behind the heads of images
sthānaka	standing posture
sukhāsana	seated posture, one leg placed horizontally on the seat and another suspended below
tiṇai (T)	five-fold topographical division of the country; the five being *kuṟiñci* (hills), *mullai* (forest), *marutam* (fertile fields), *neytal* (littorals) and *pālai* (deserts)
tri	three
trinetra	triple eyed
triśūla	trident
uruhasta	a posture of the hand, placed on thigh
uttarīya	an upper cloth, placed on the shoulder and sent across the body
vajra	thunder-bolt, weapon typical of Indra and Skanda
valampuri	the right warp, in the present context images of Gaṇapati with proboscis turned to the right
vimāna	a temple or more specifically the superstructure
yajñopavīta	sacred thread, meant for the *dvija* (the twice born)

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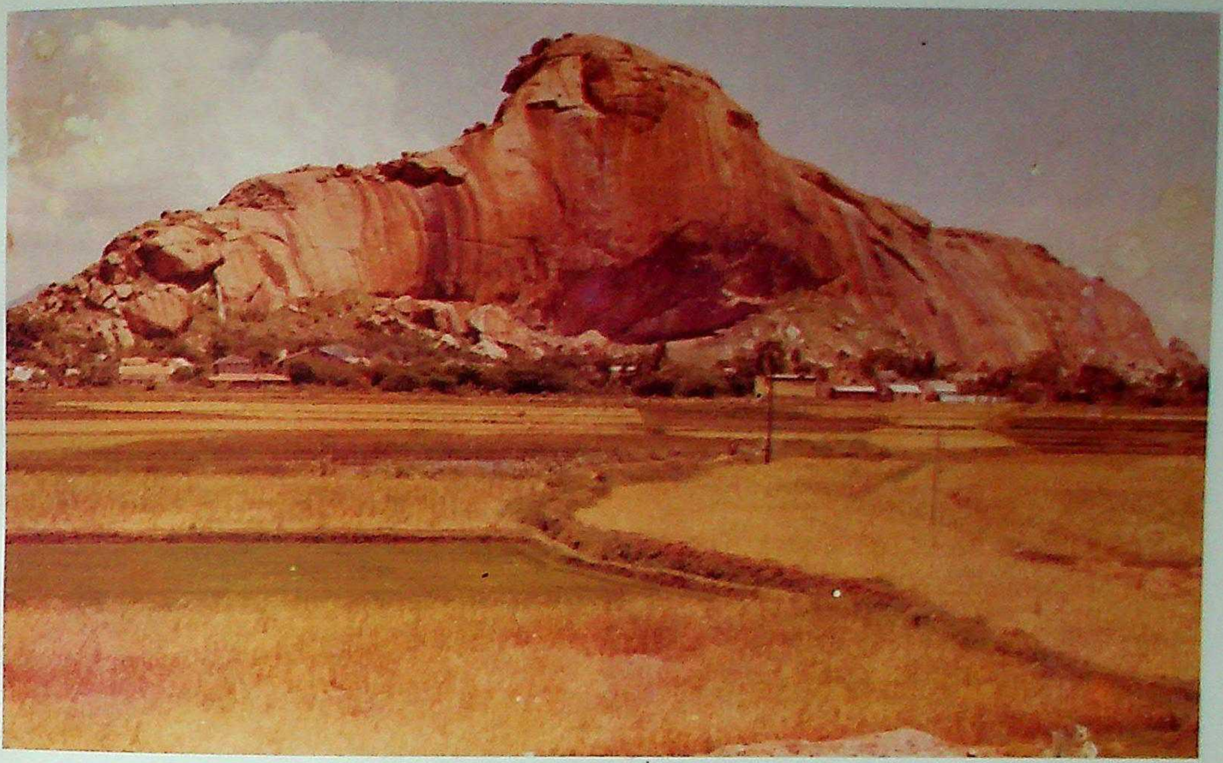

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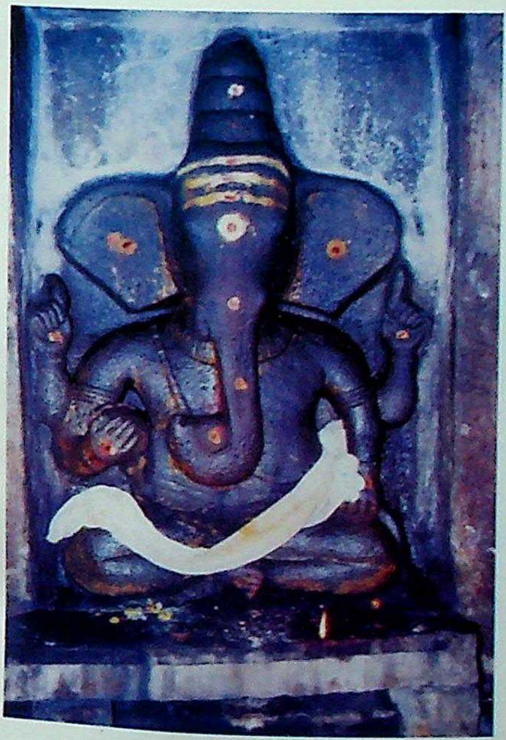

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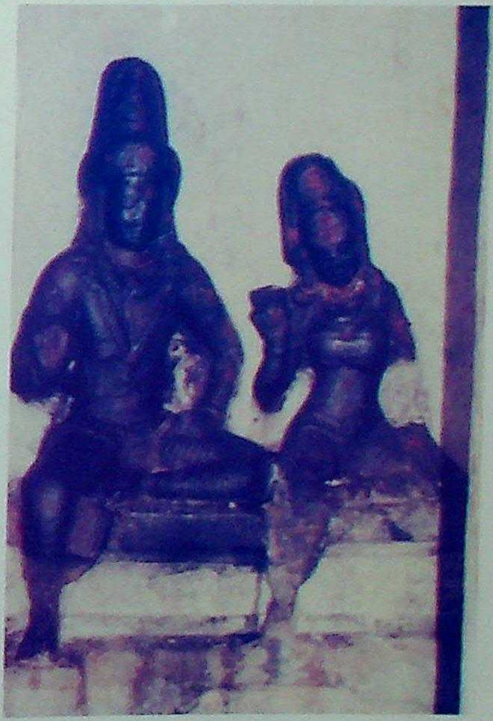

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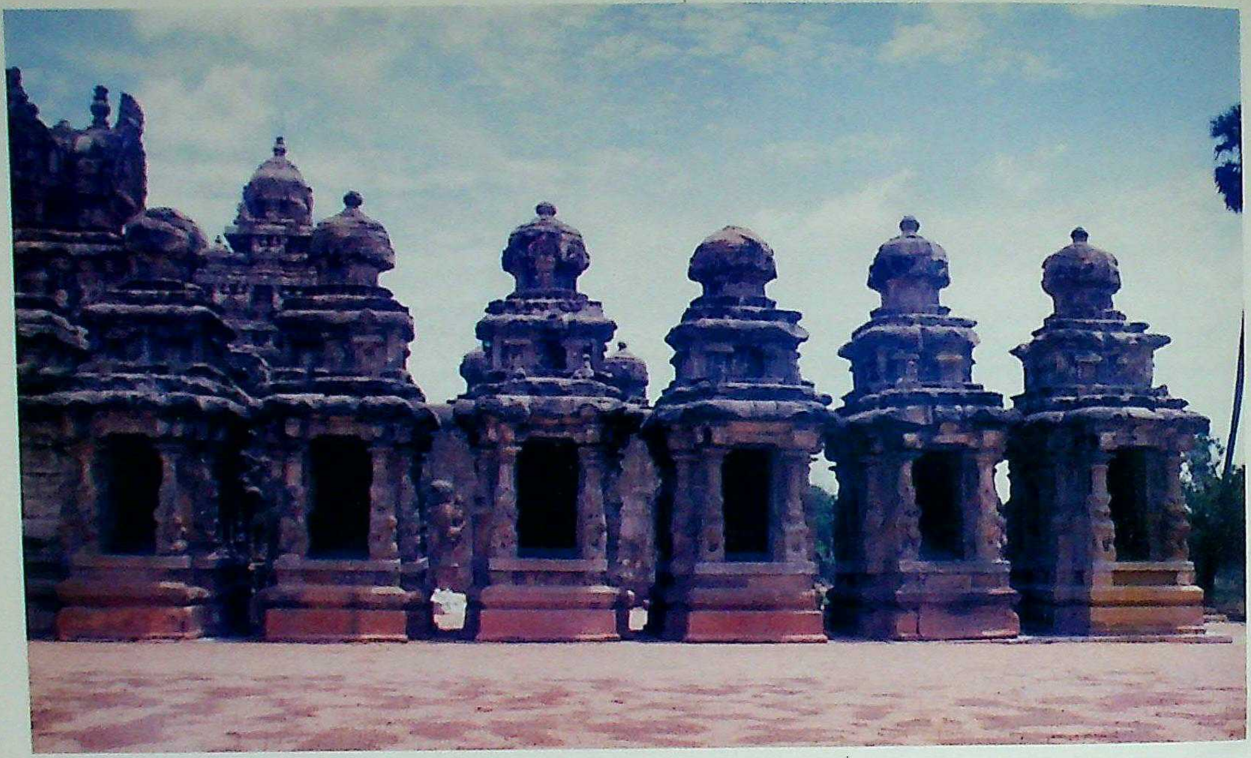

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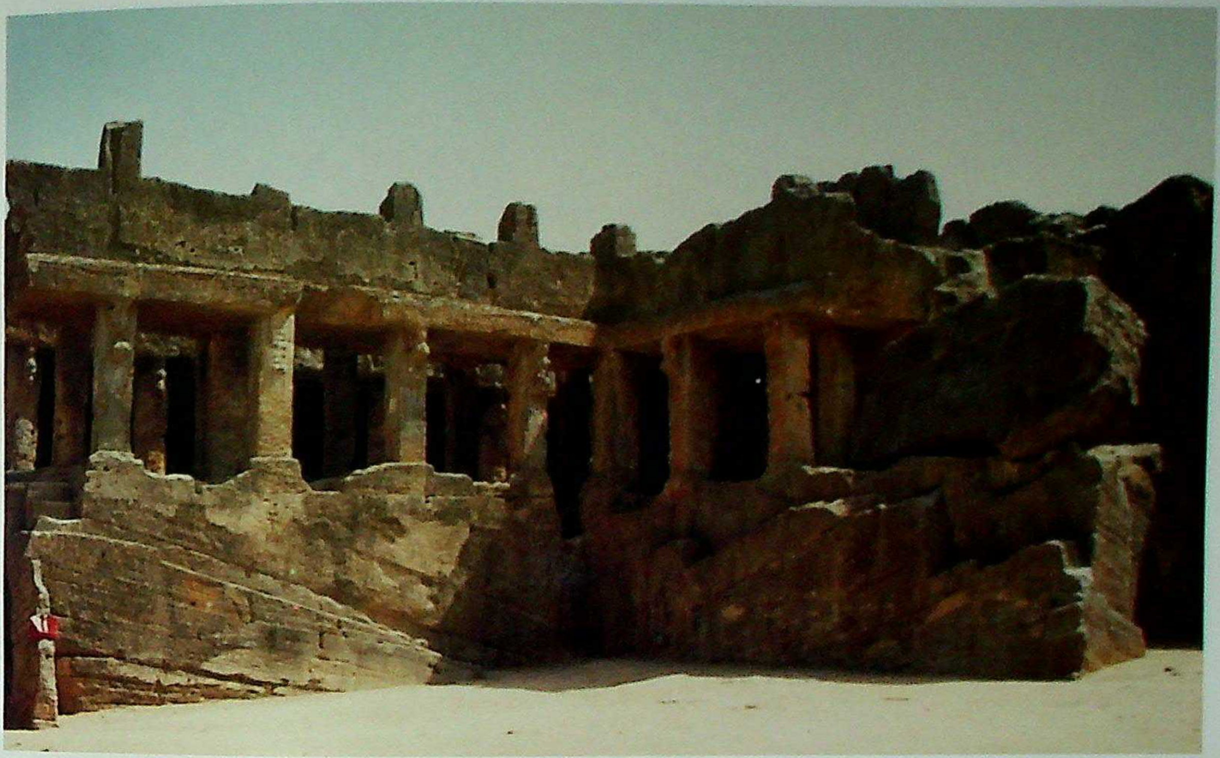

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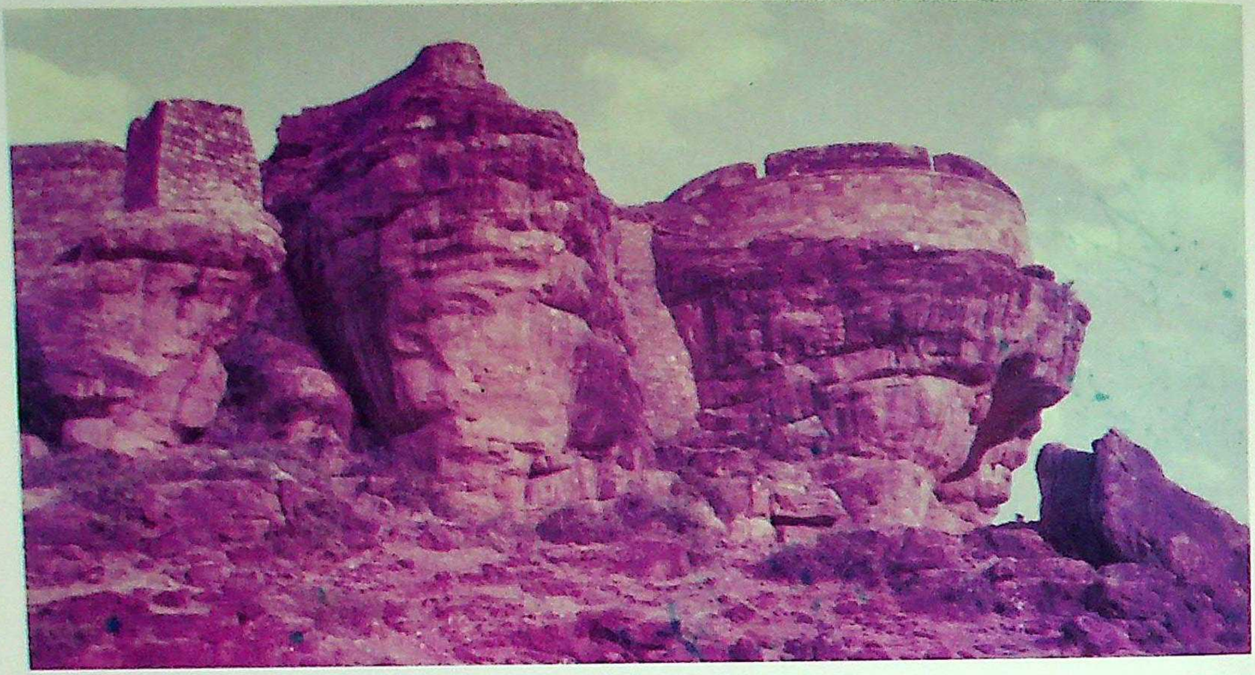

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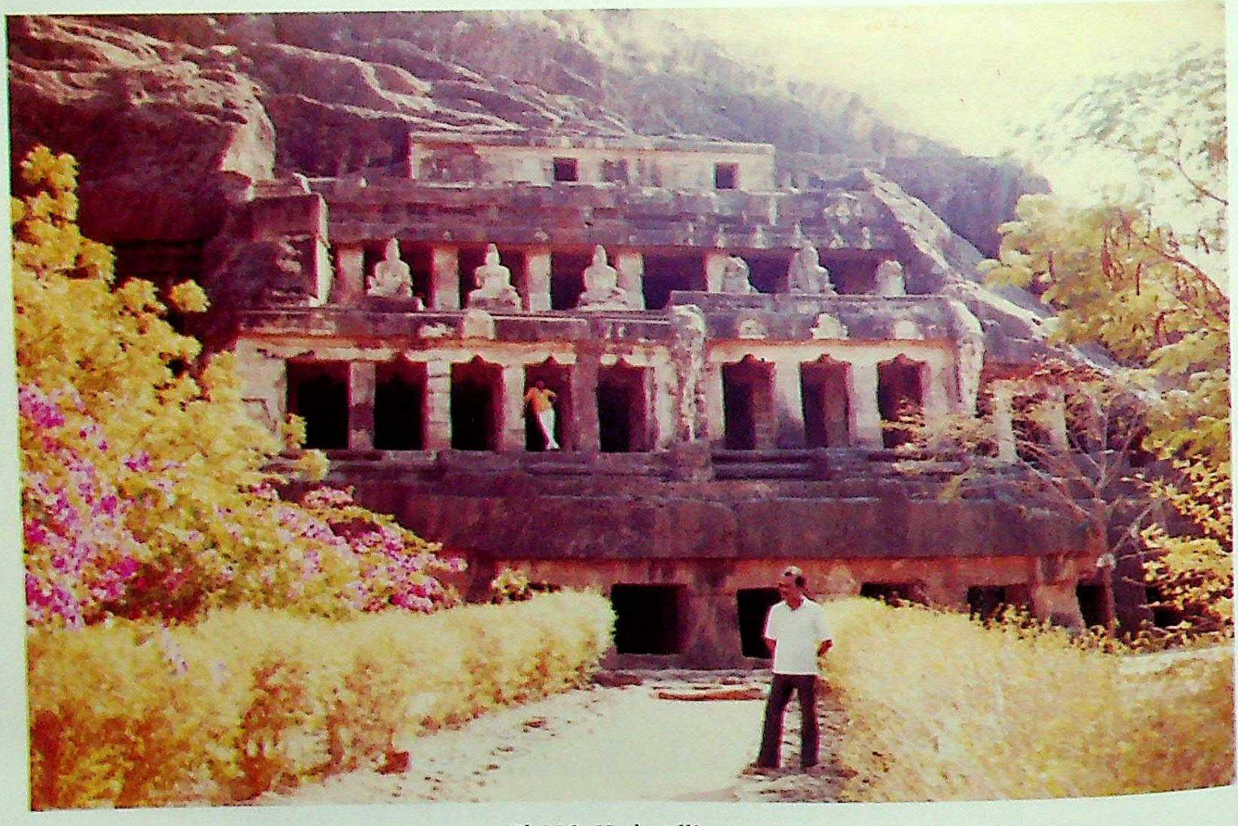

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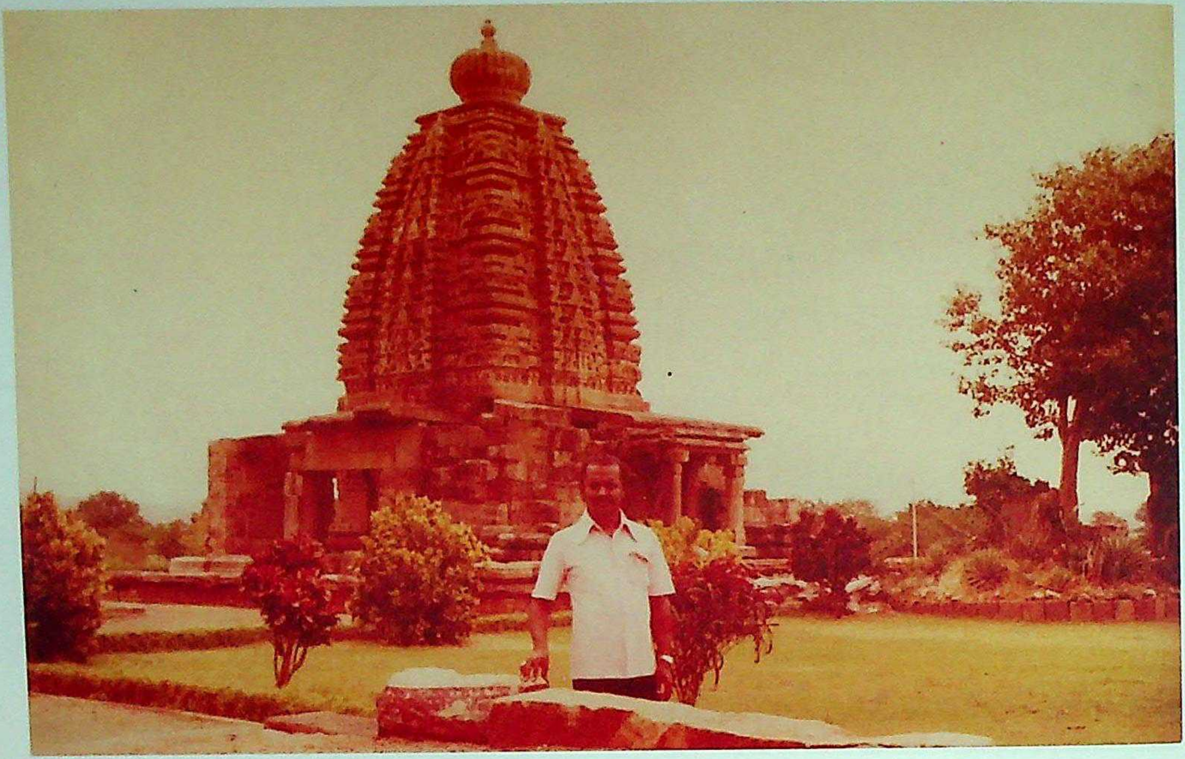

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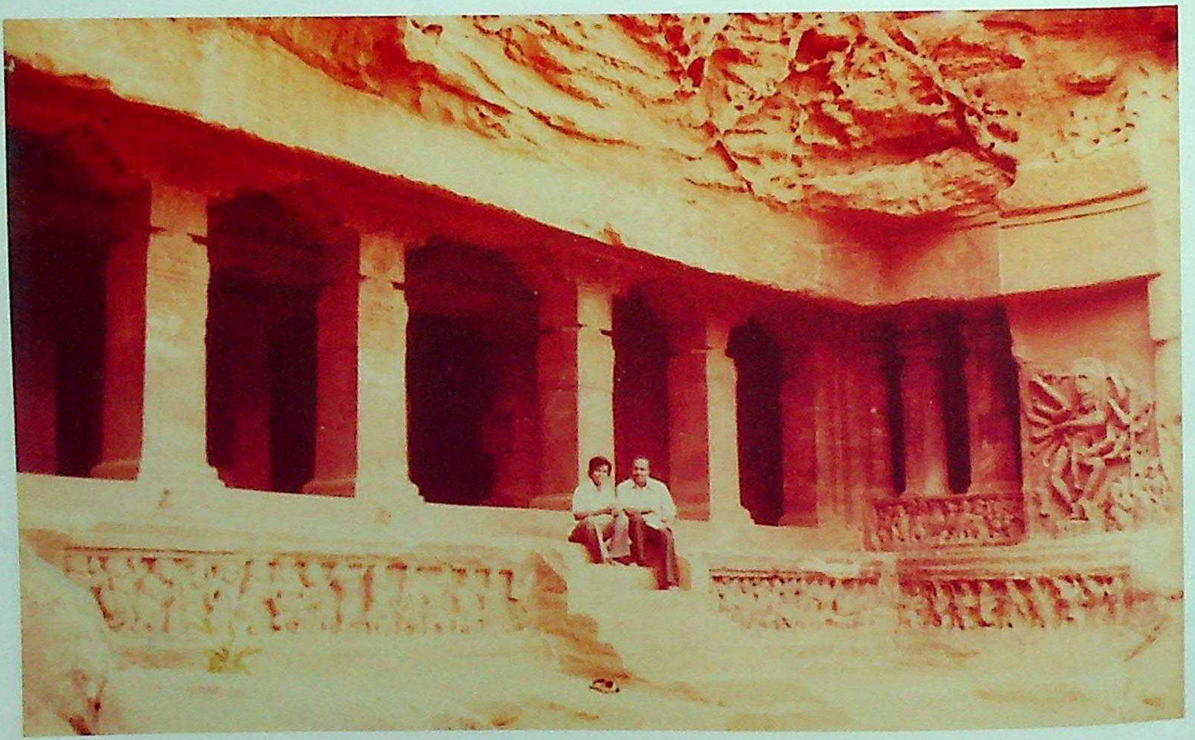

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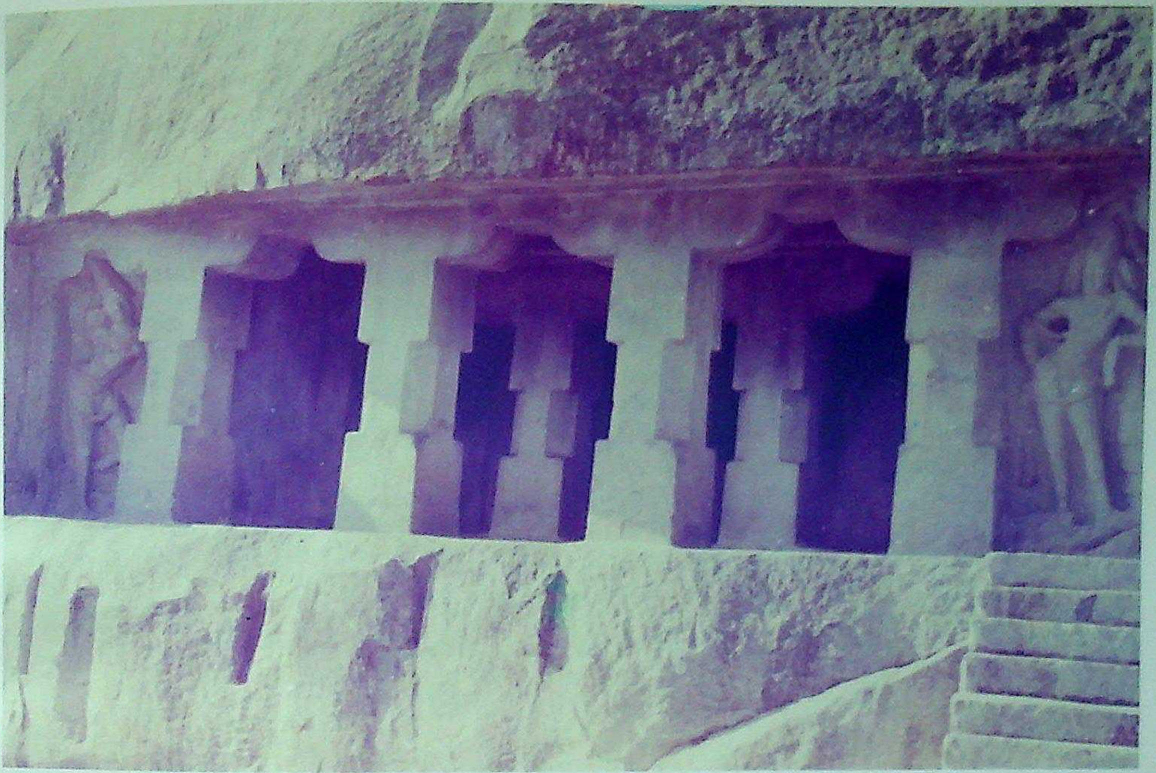

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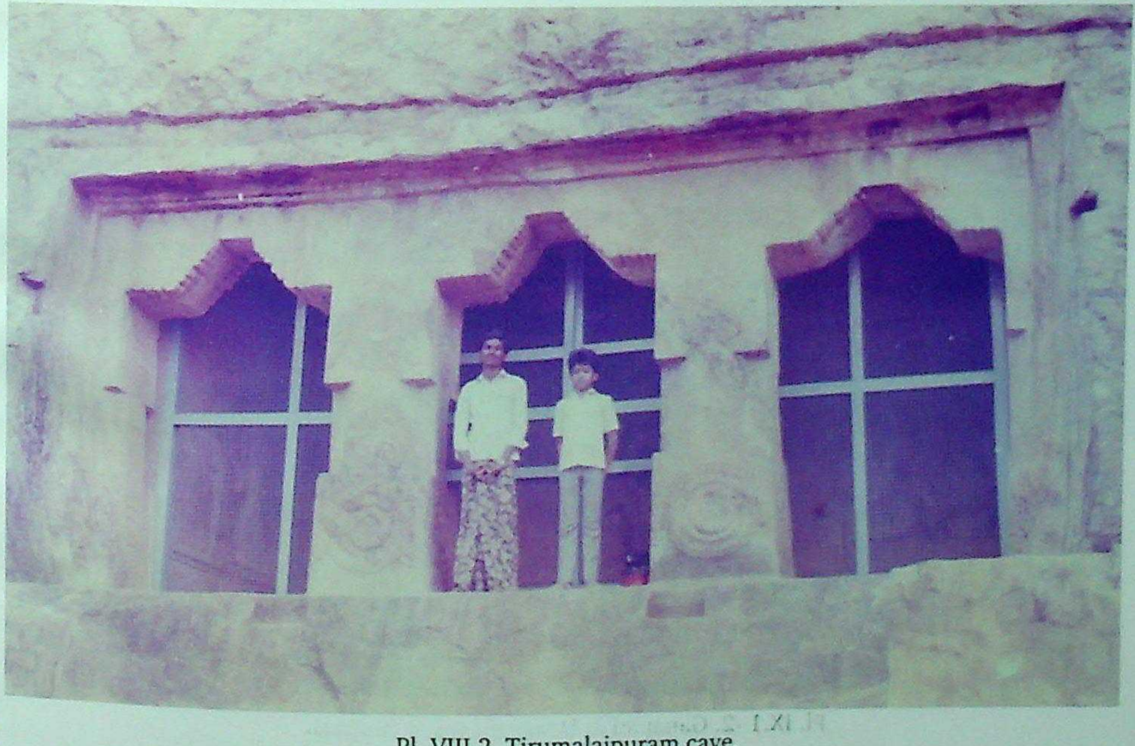

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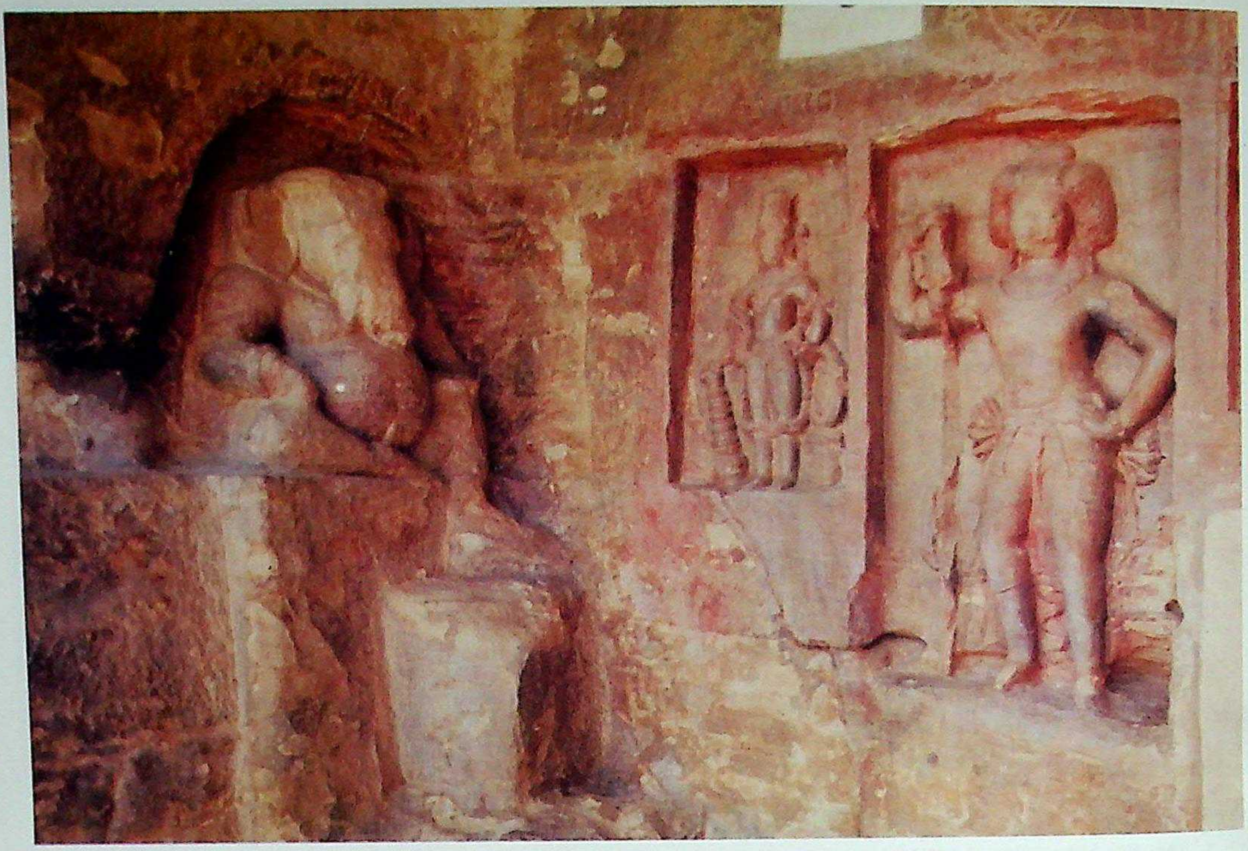

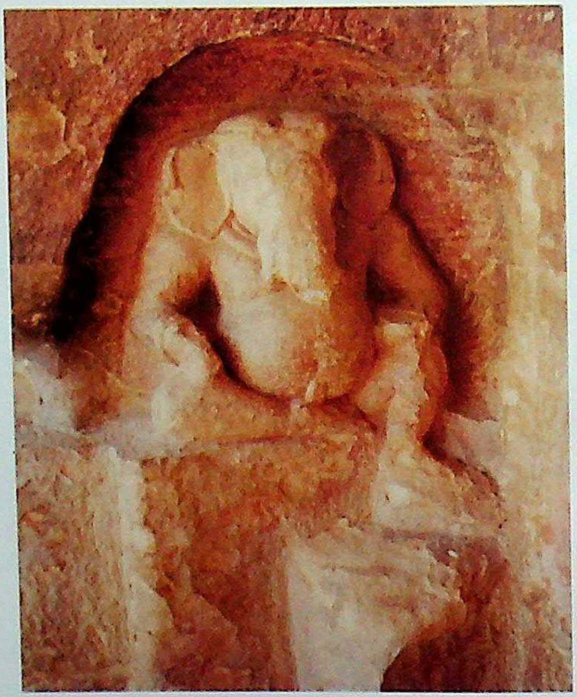

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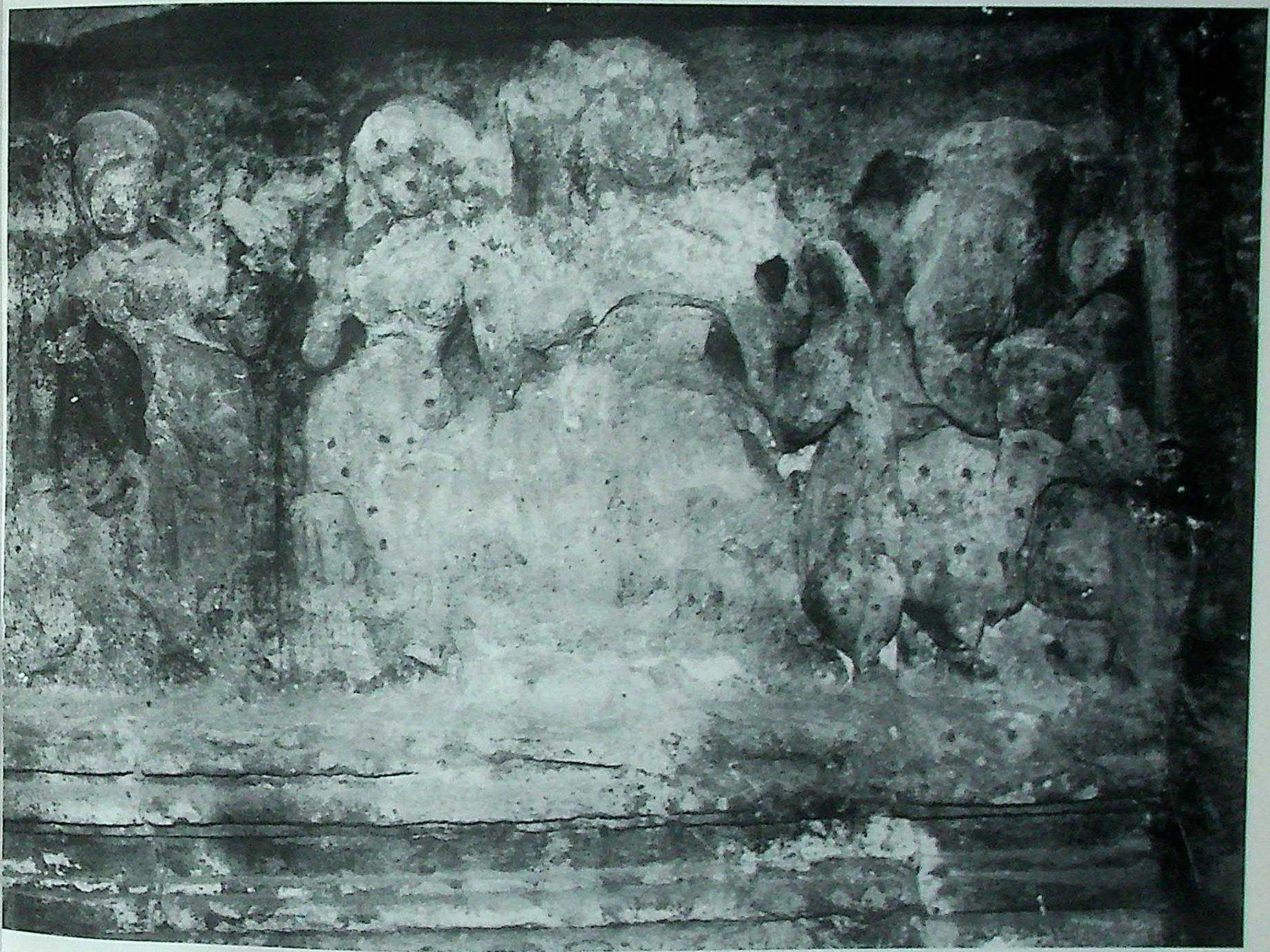

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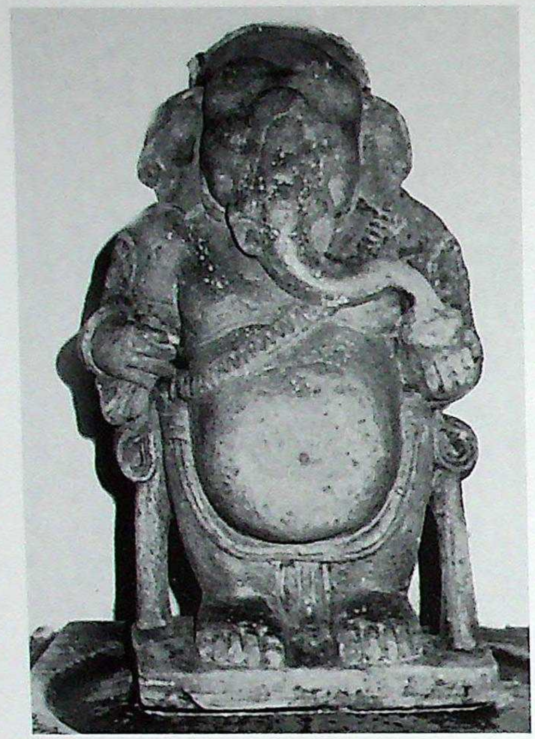

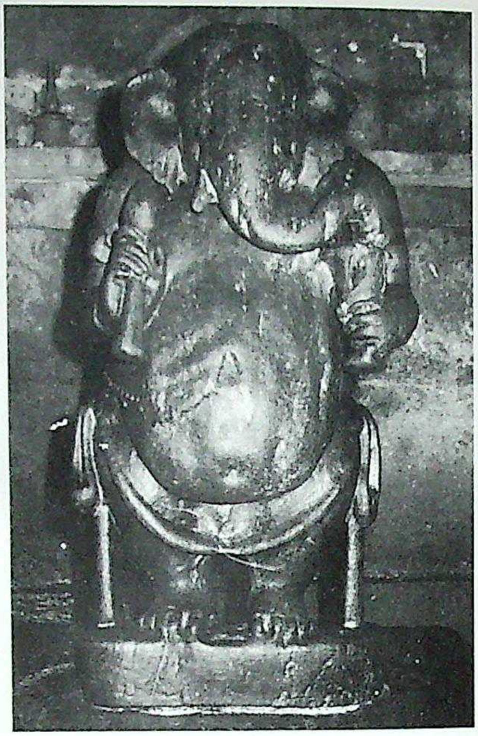

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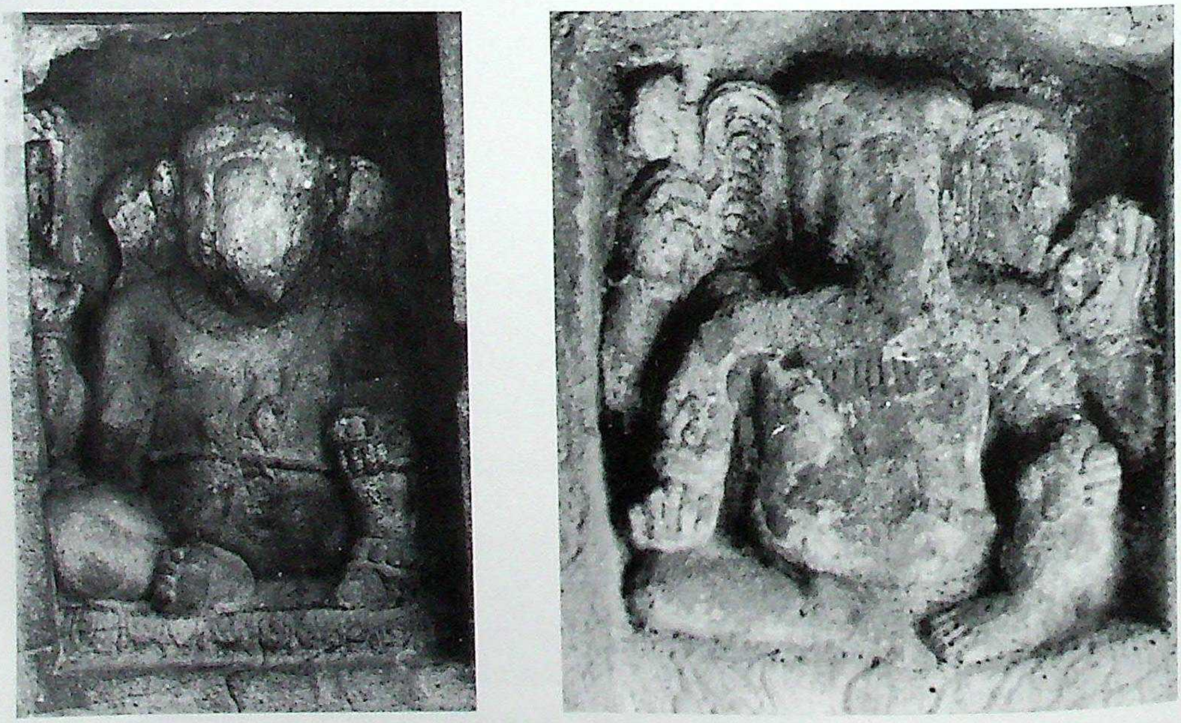

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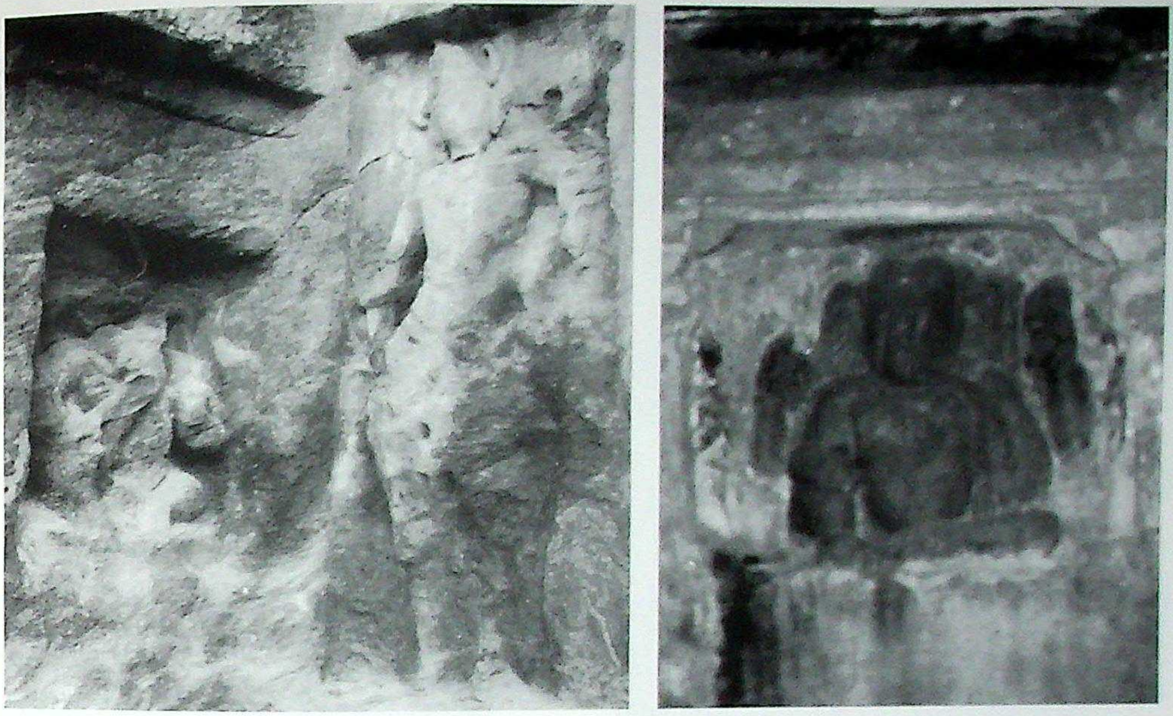

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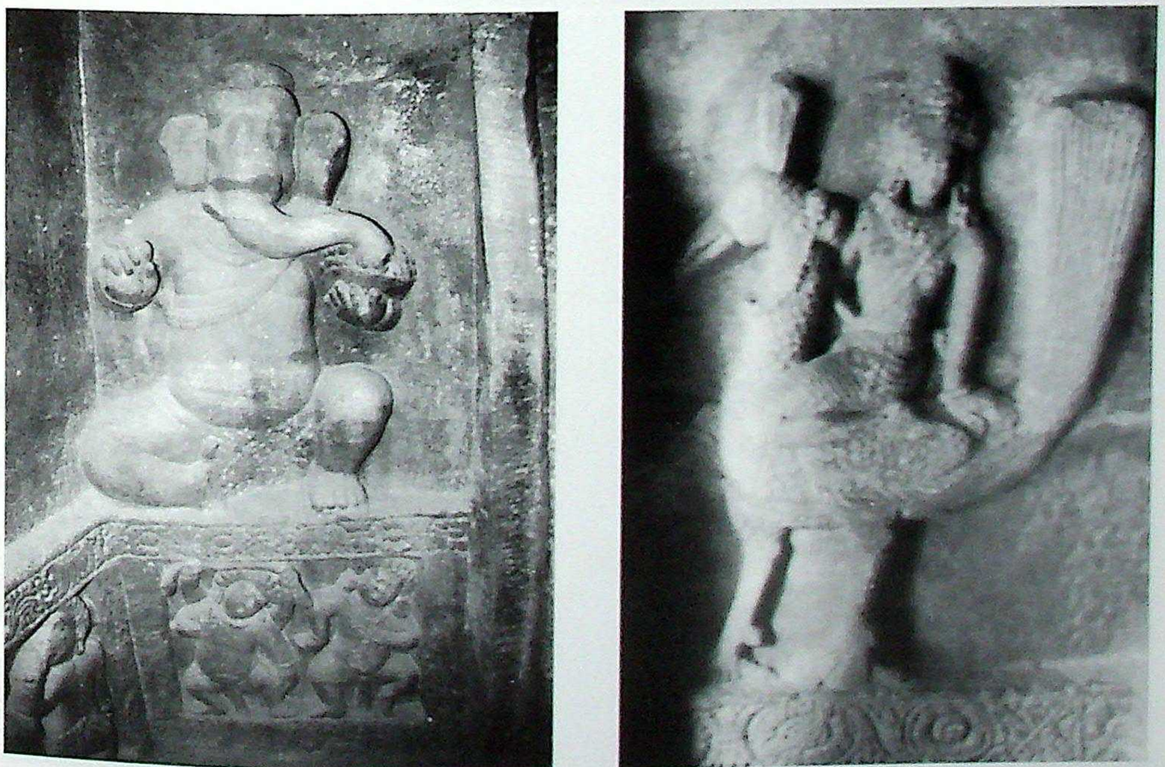

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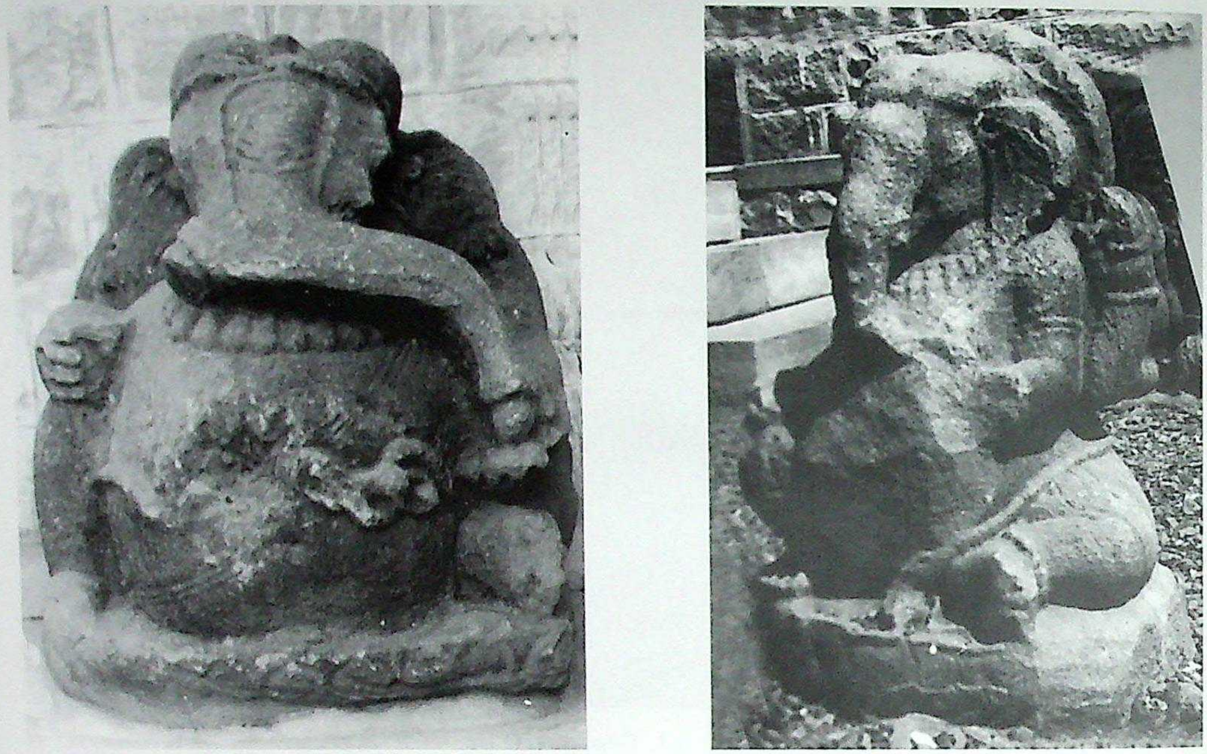

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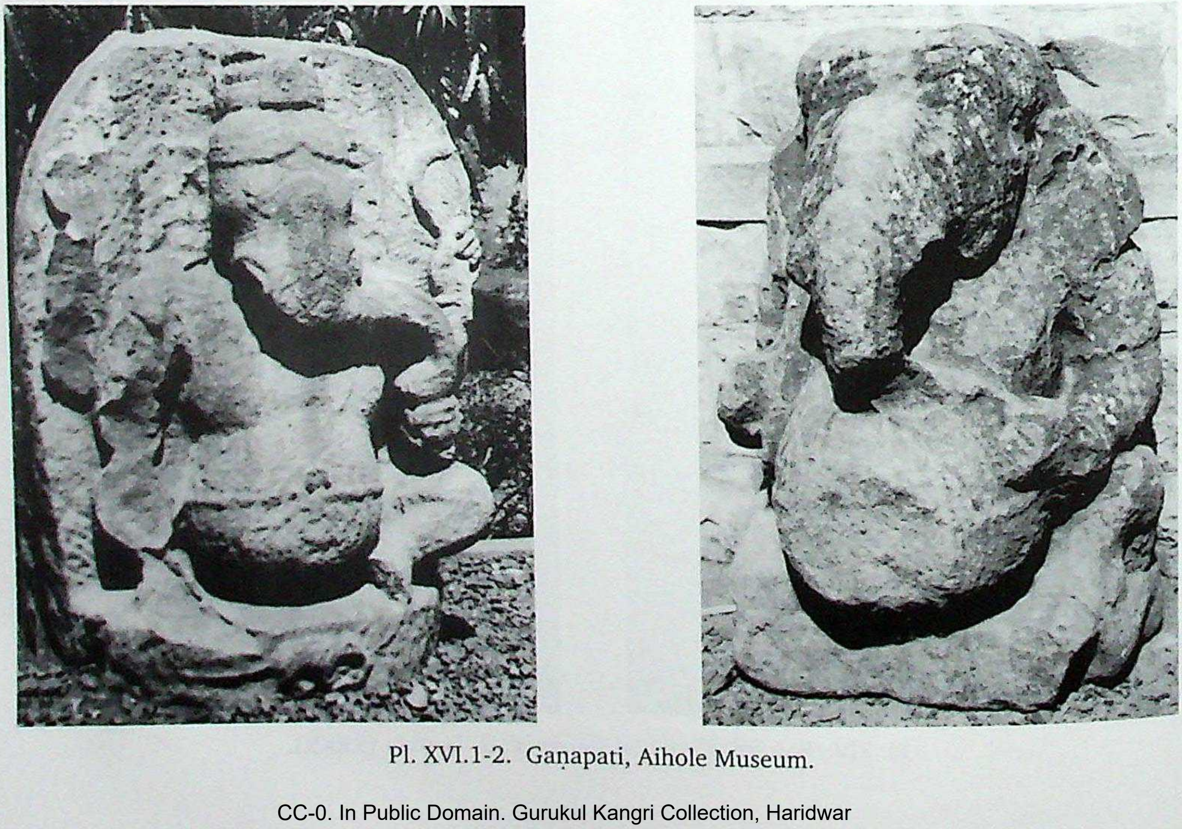

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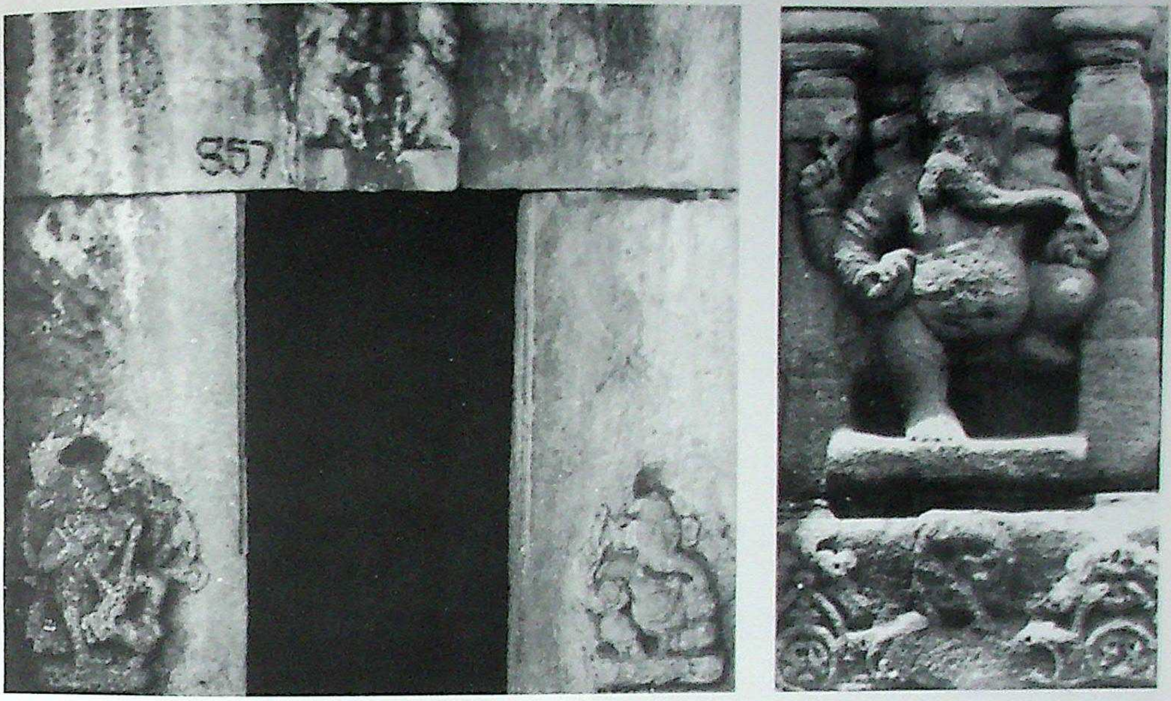

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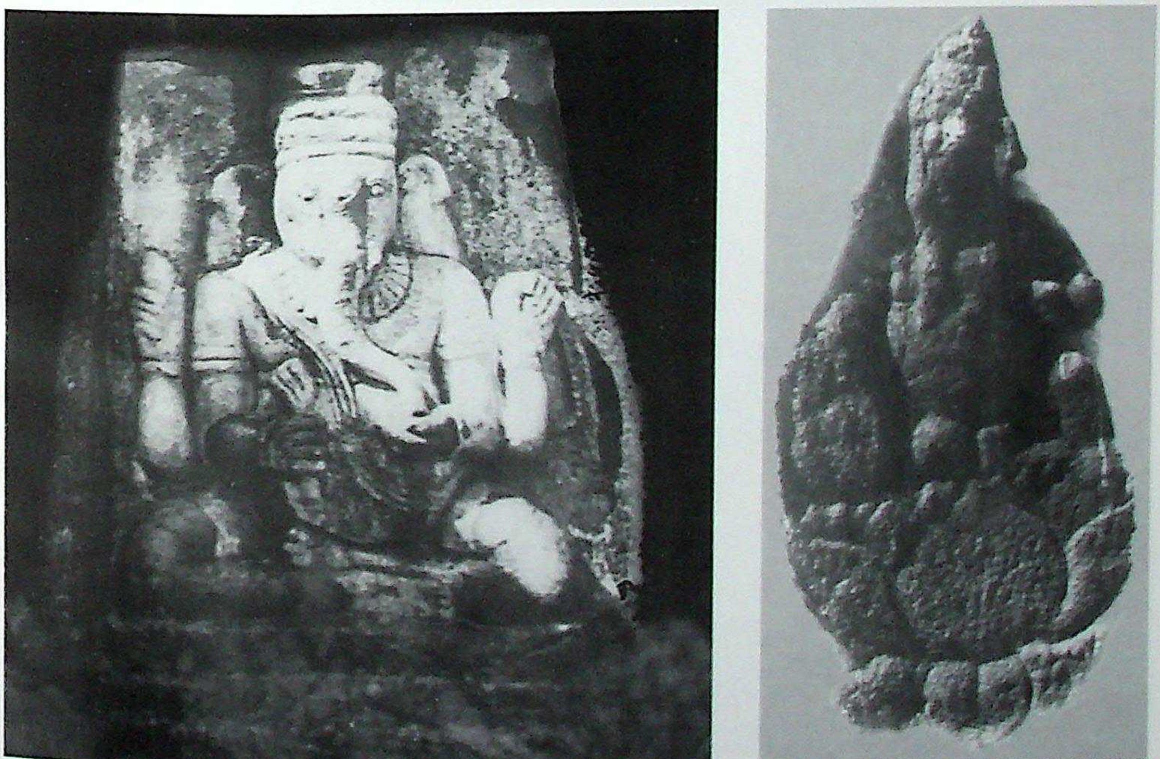

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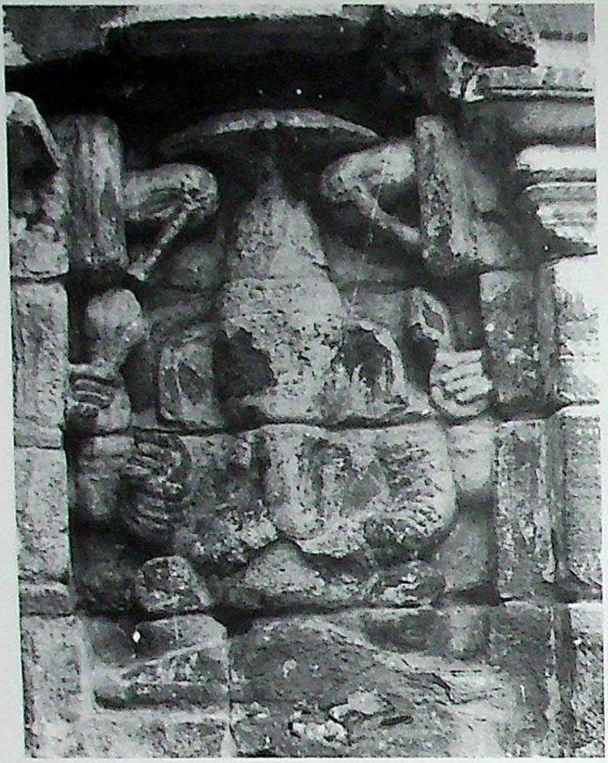

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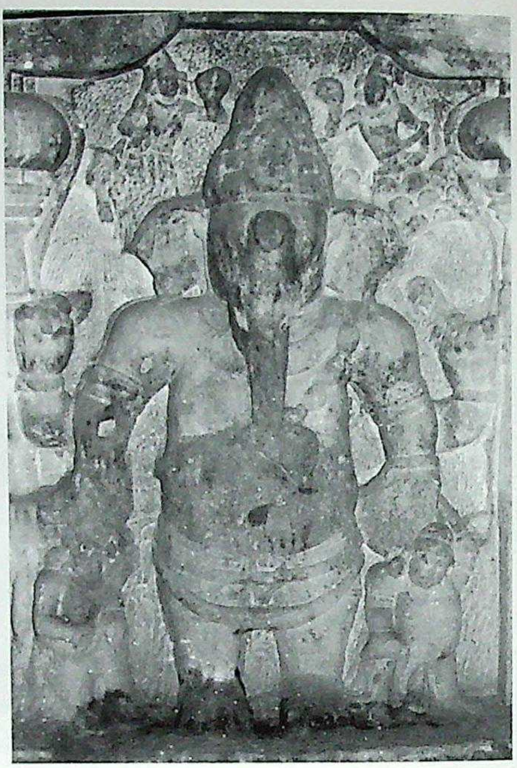

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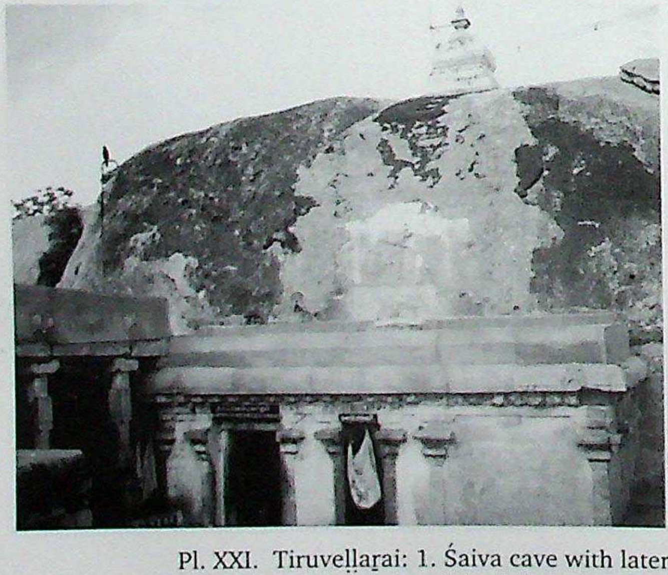

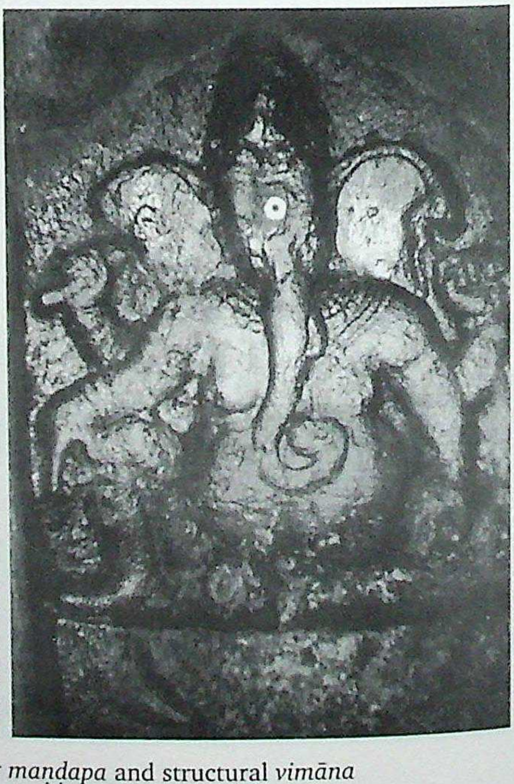

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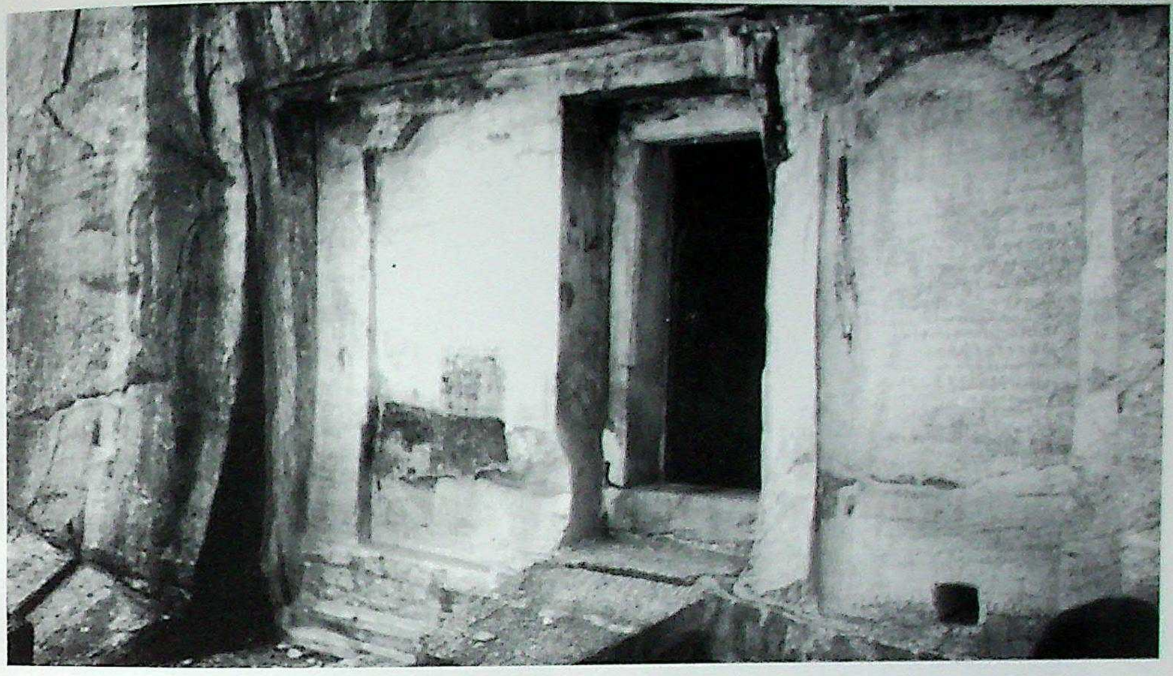

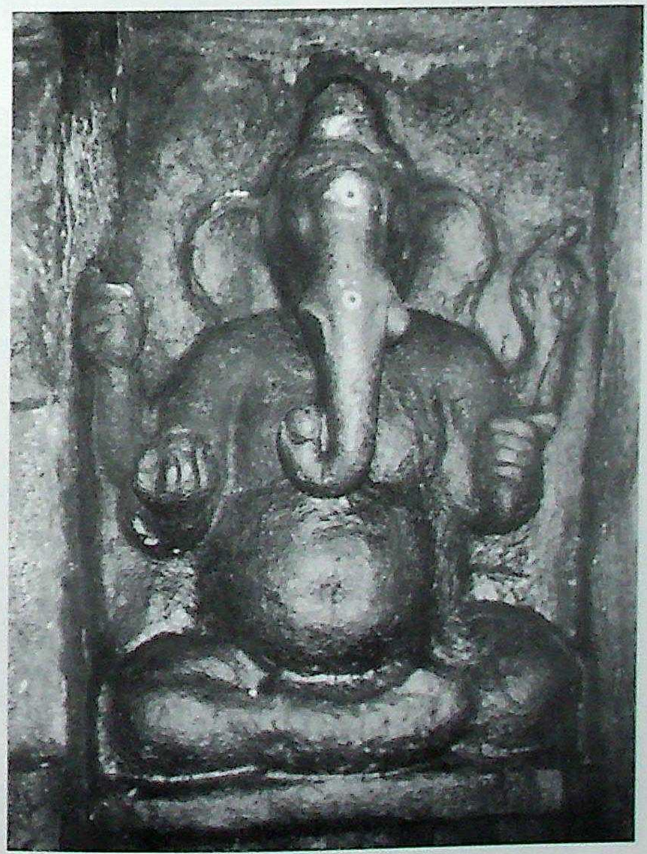

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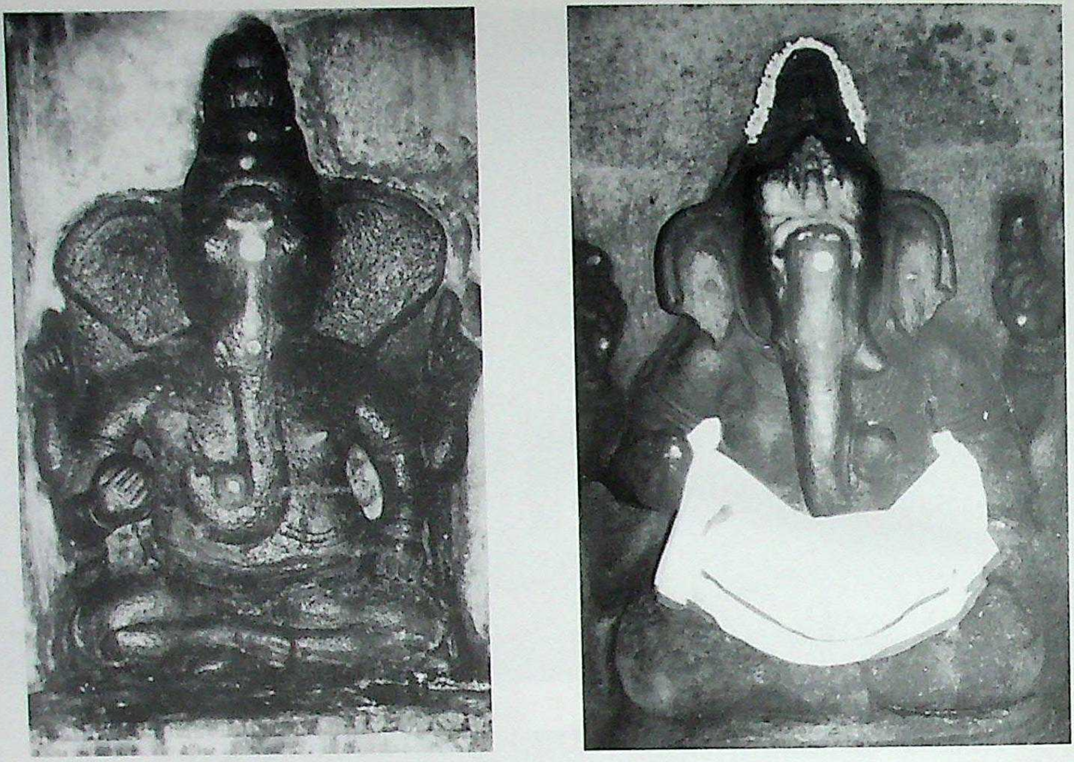

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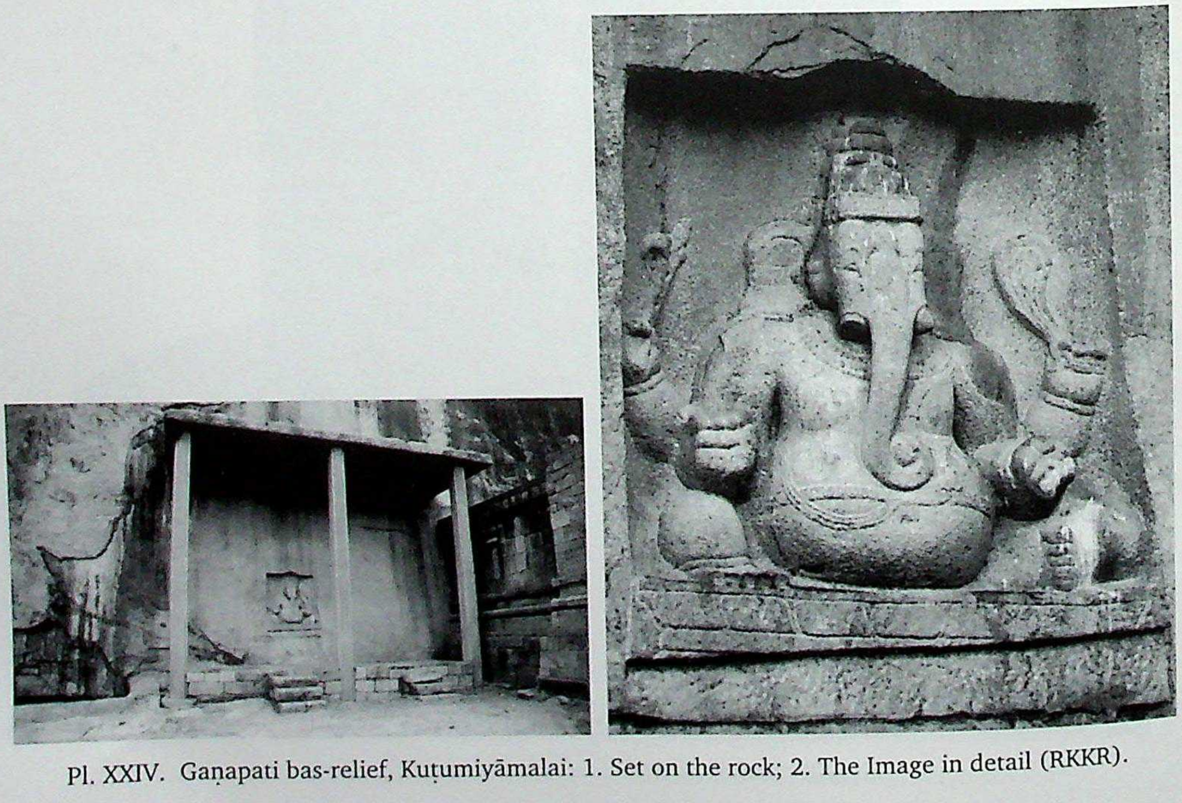

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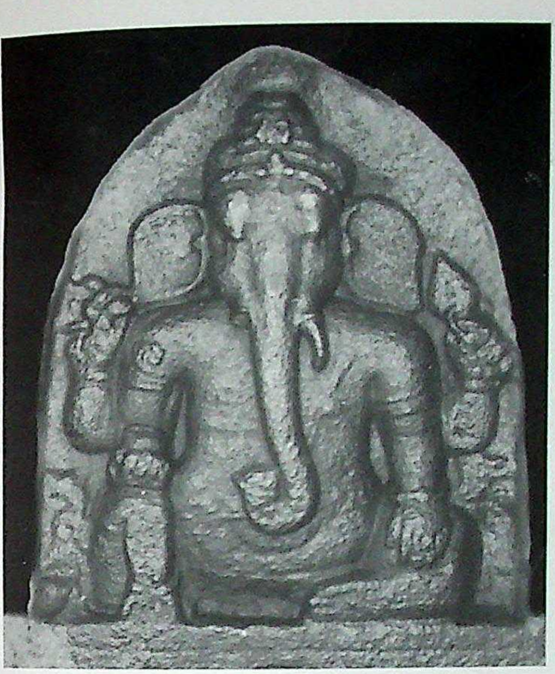

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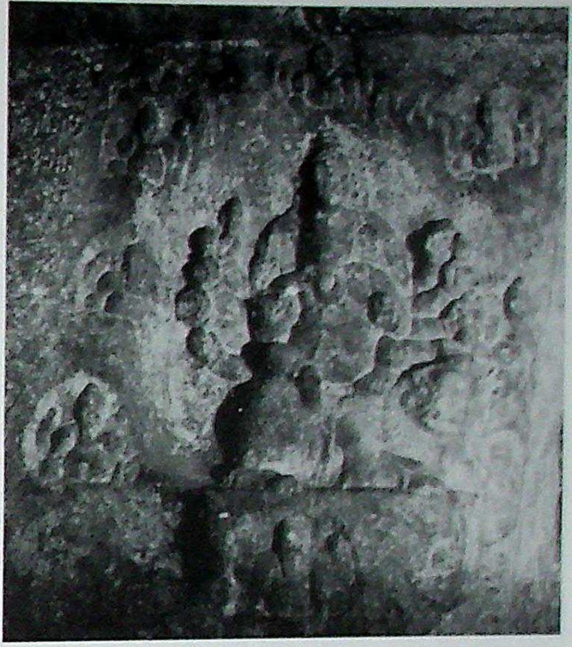

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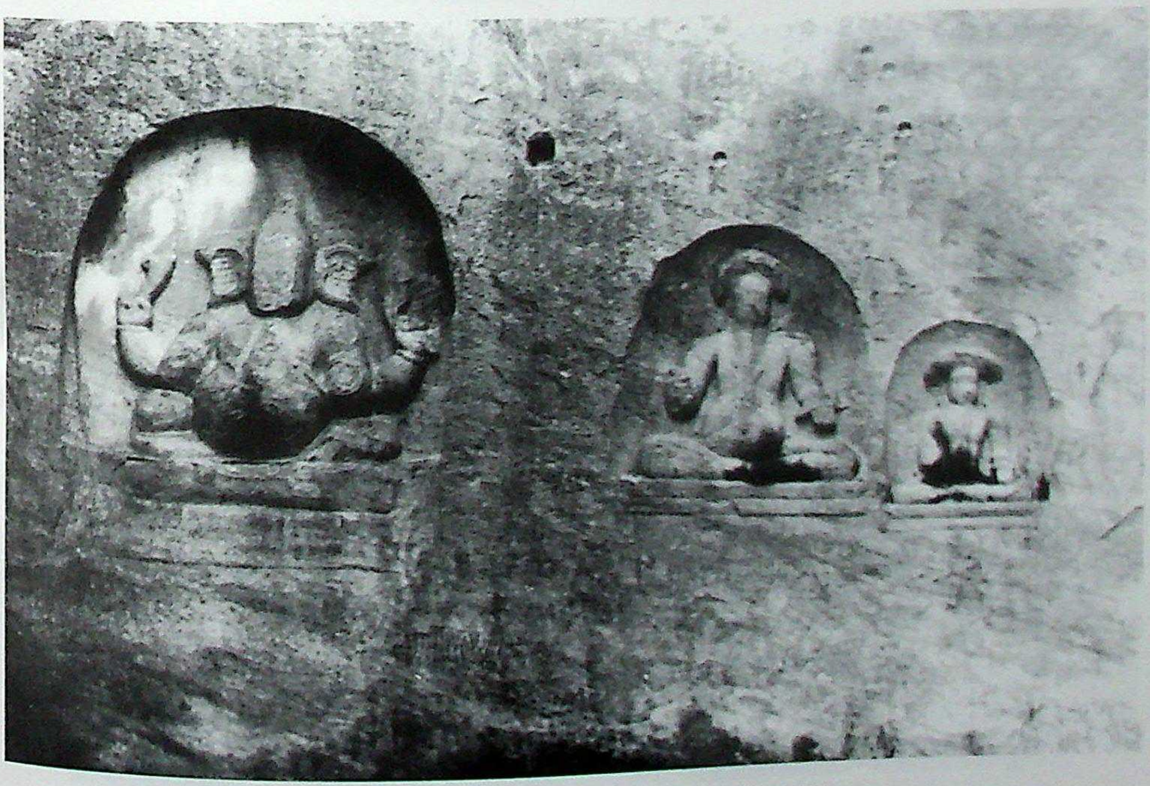

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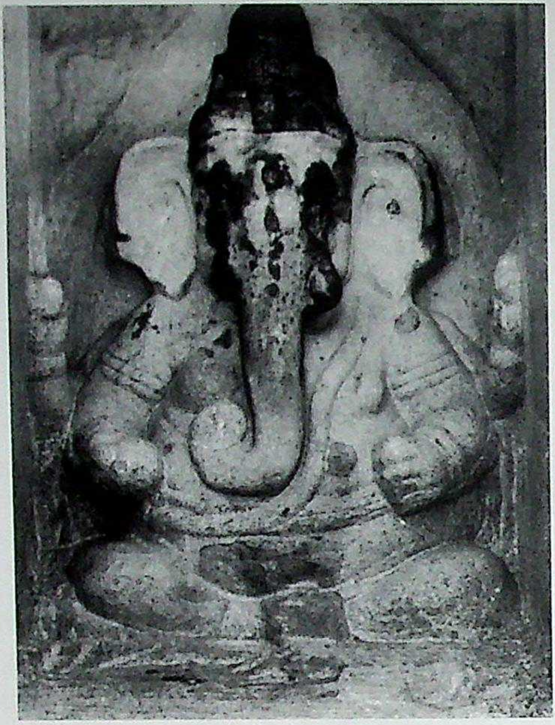

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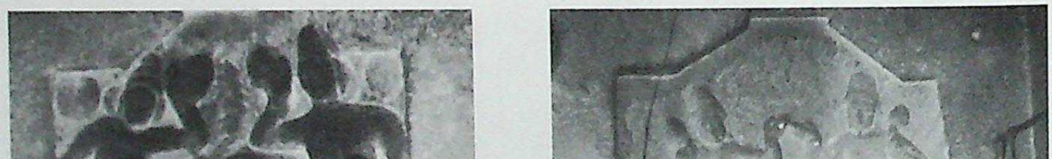

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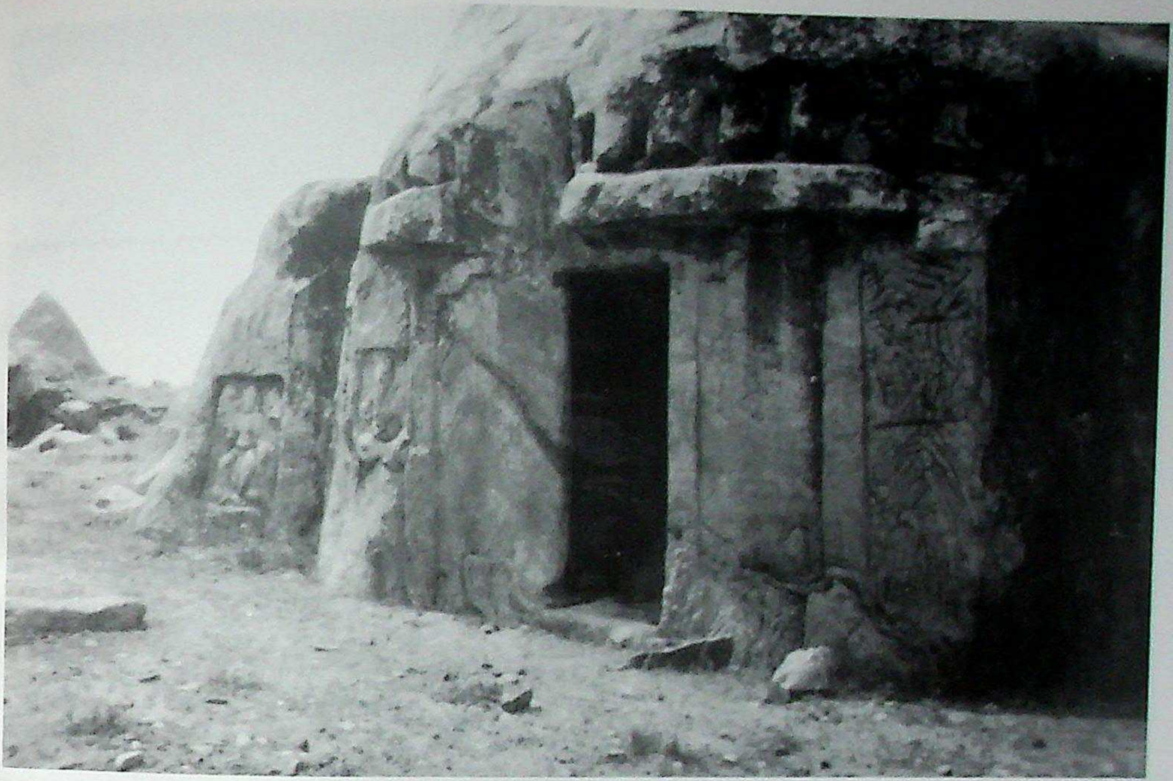

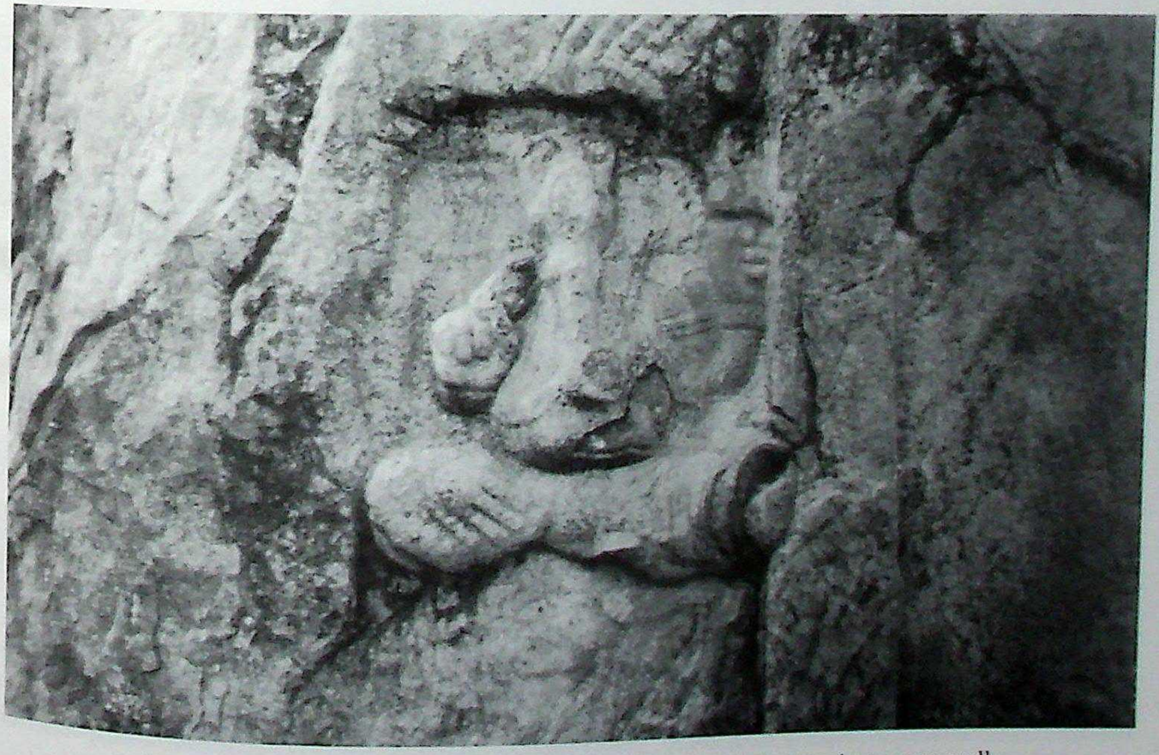

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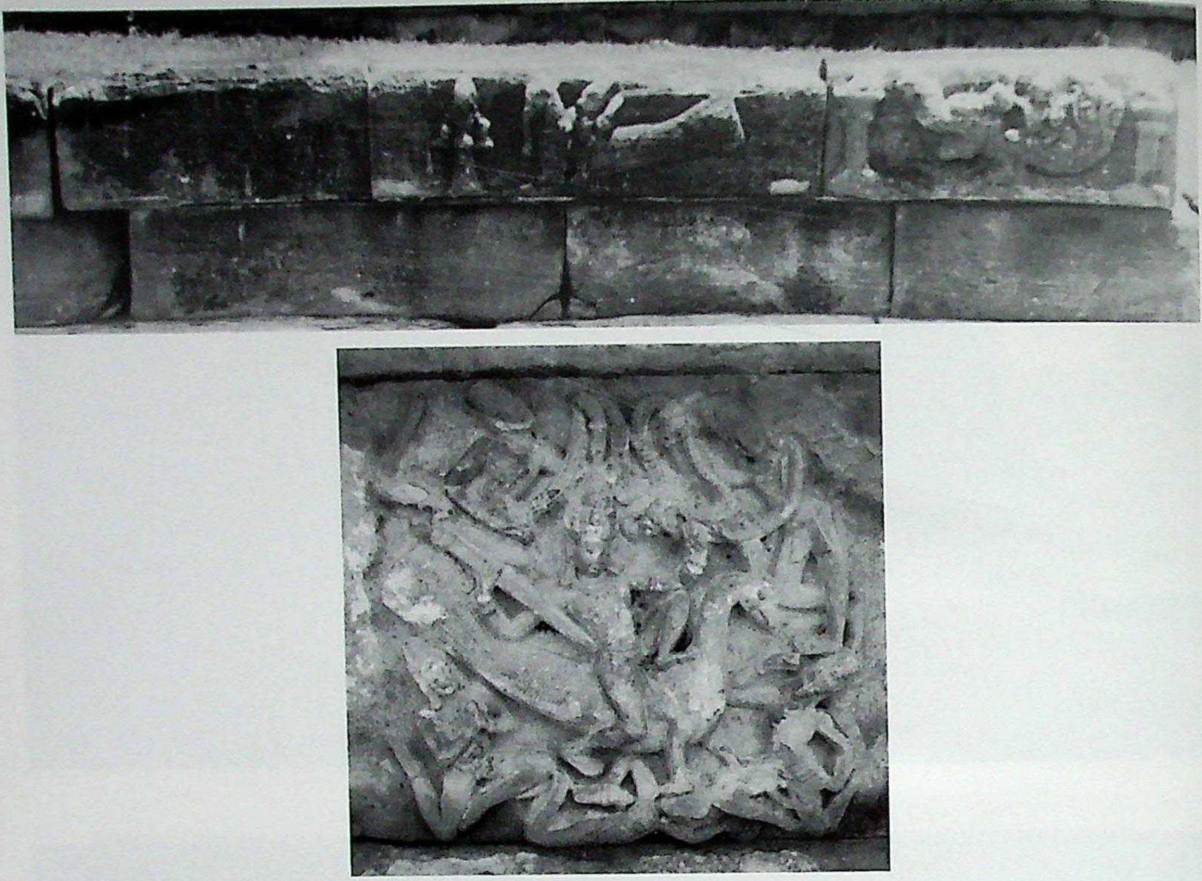

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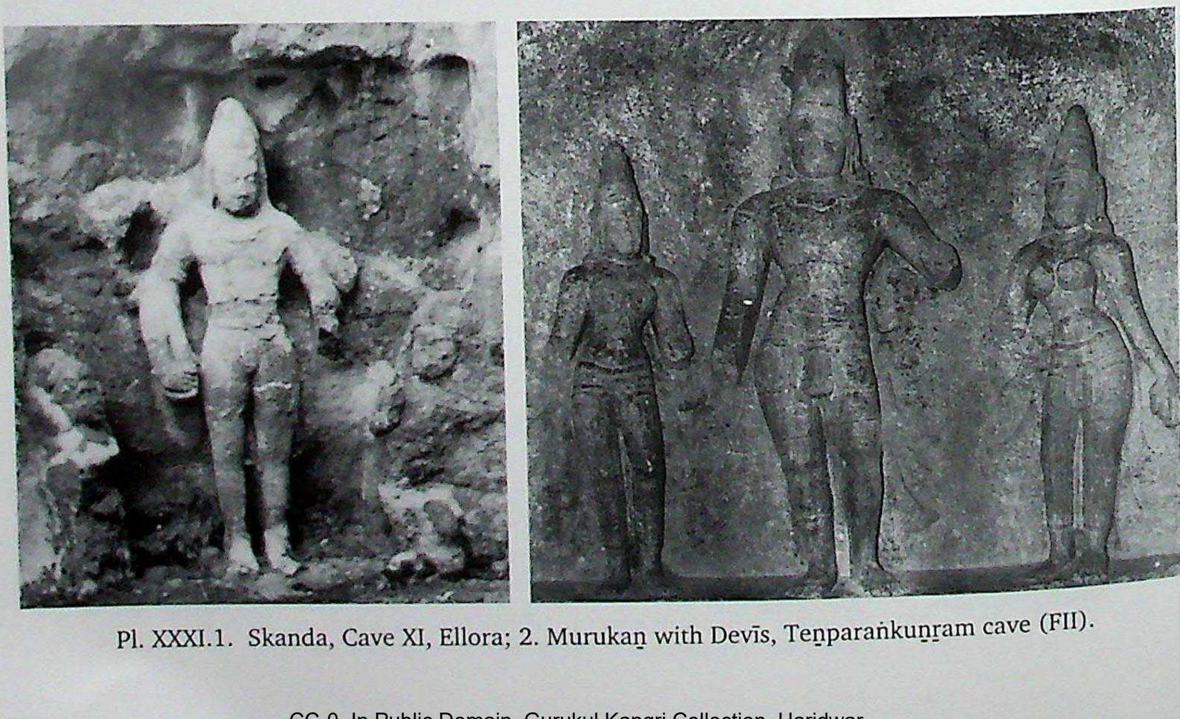

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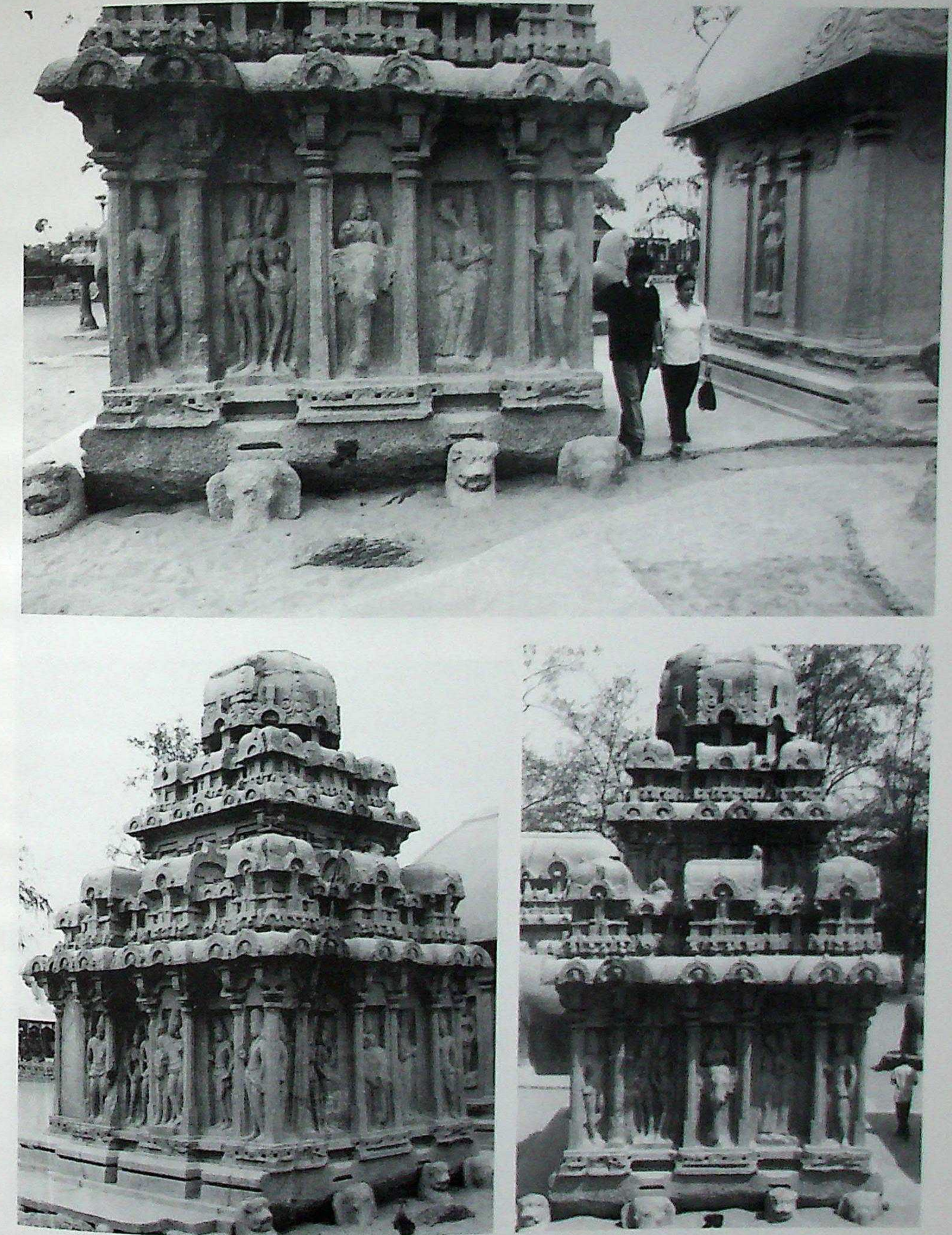

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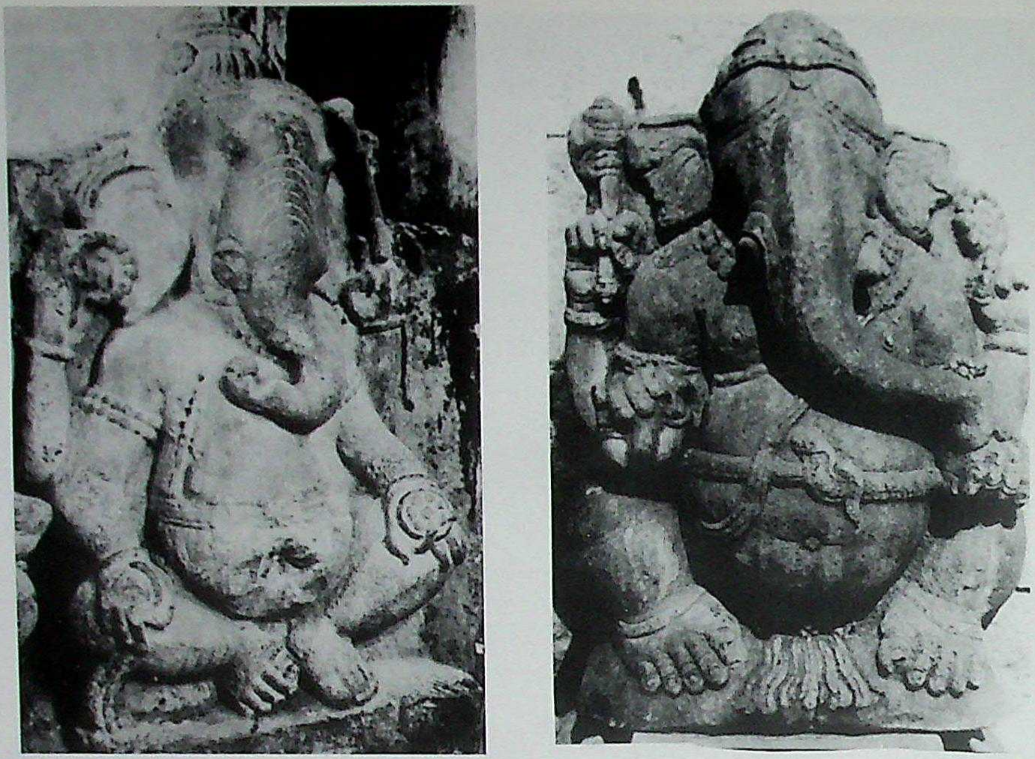

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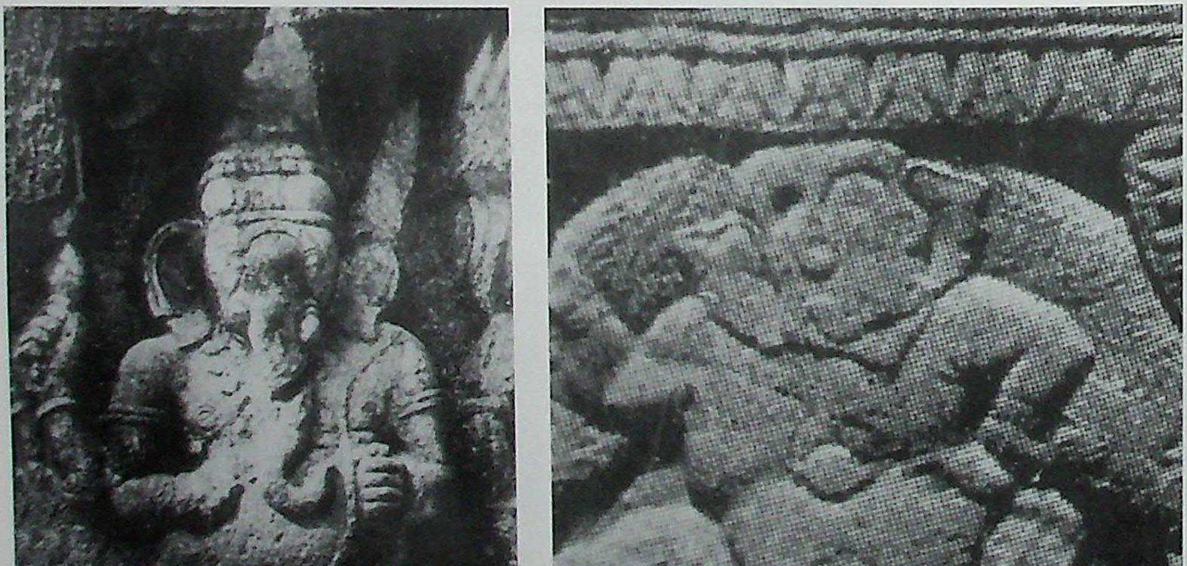

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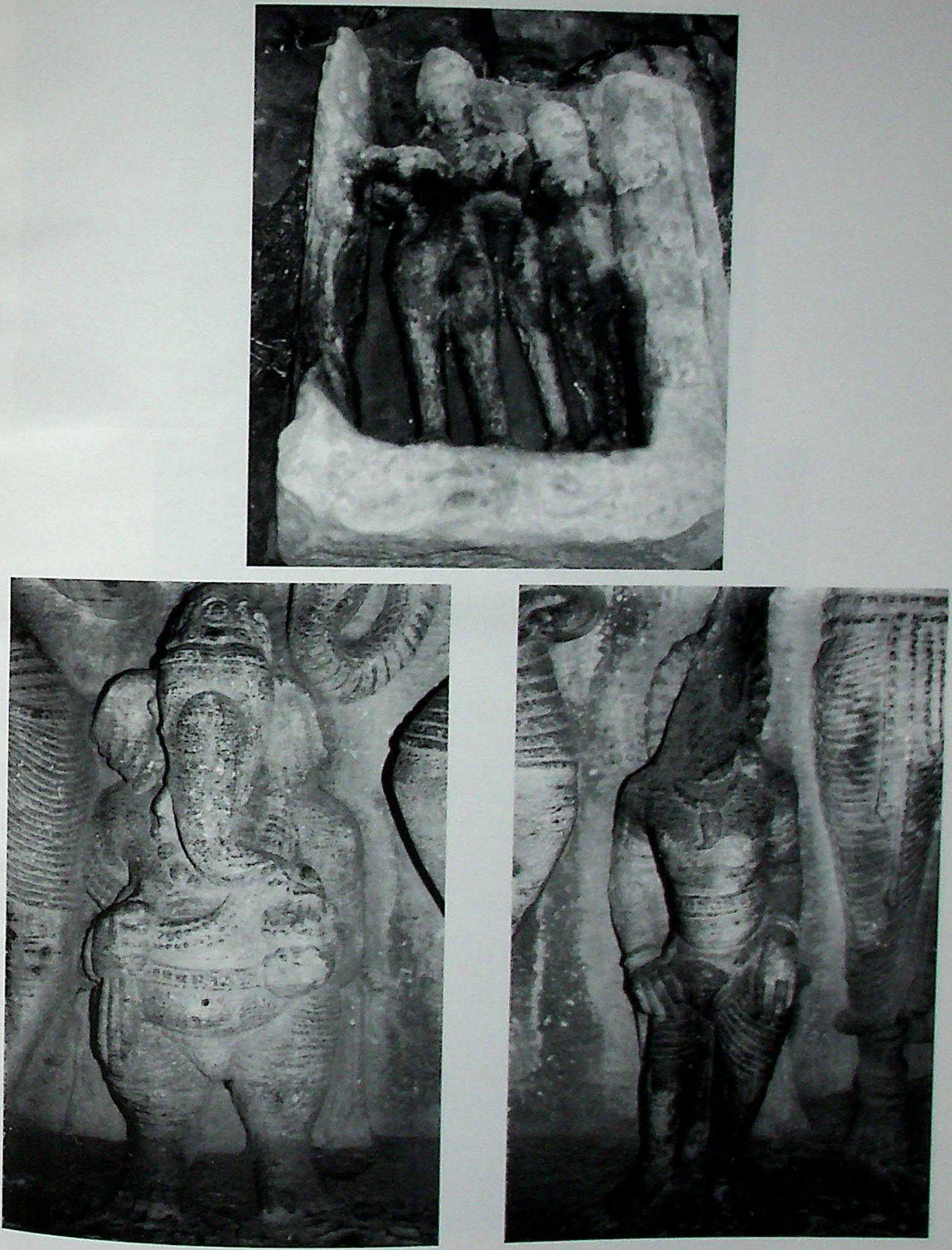

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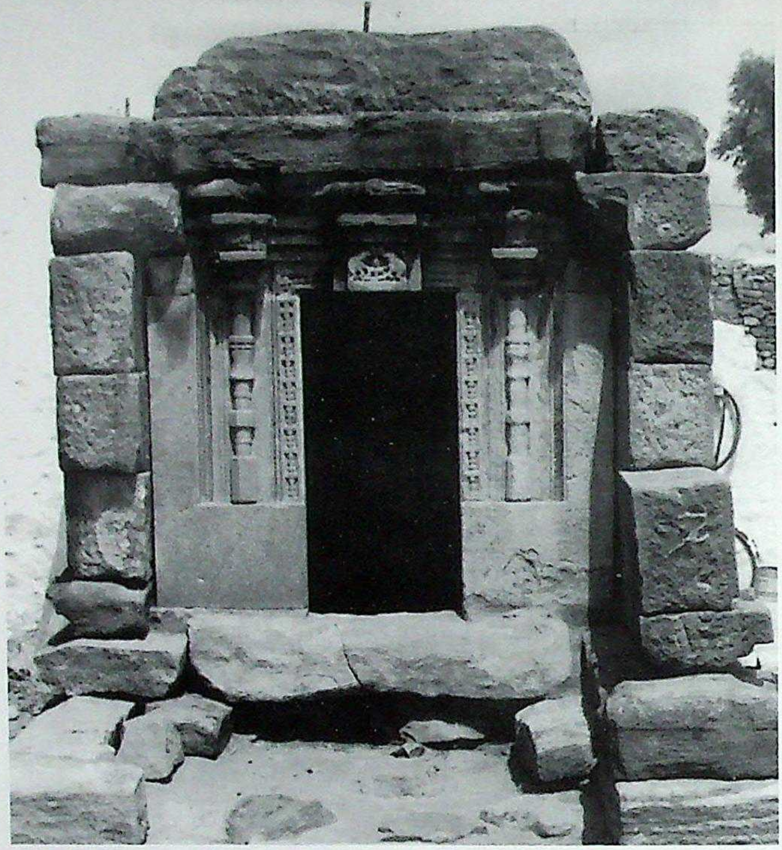

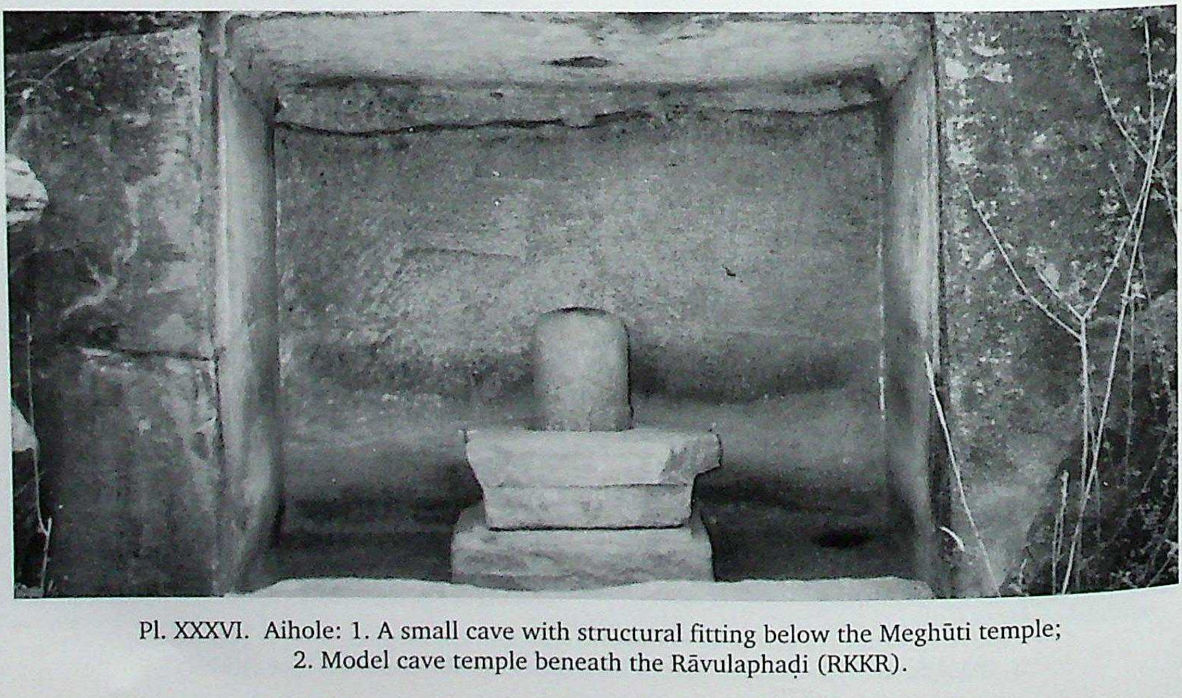

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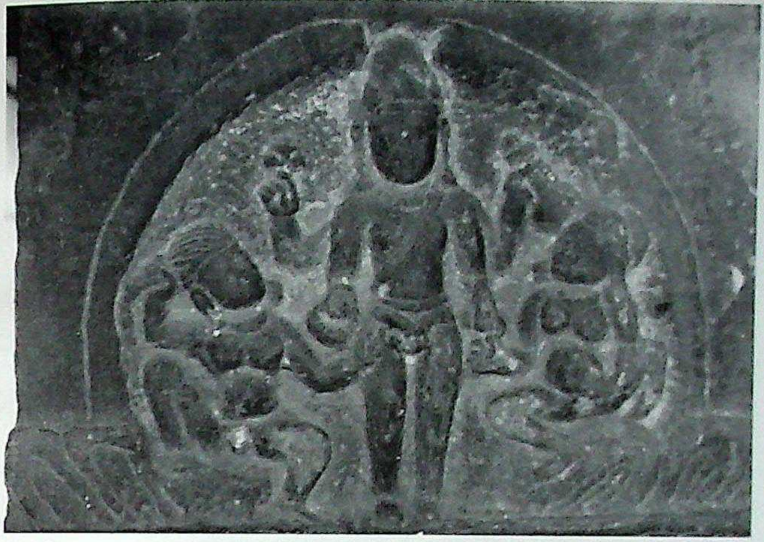

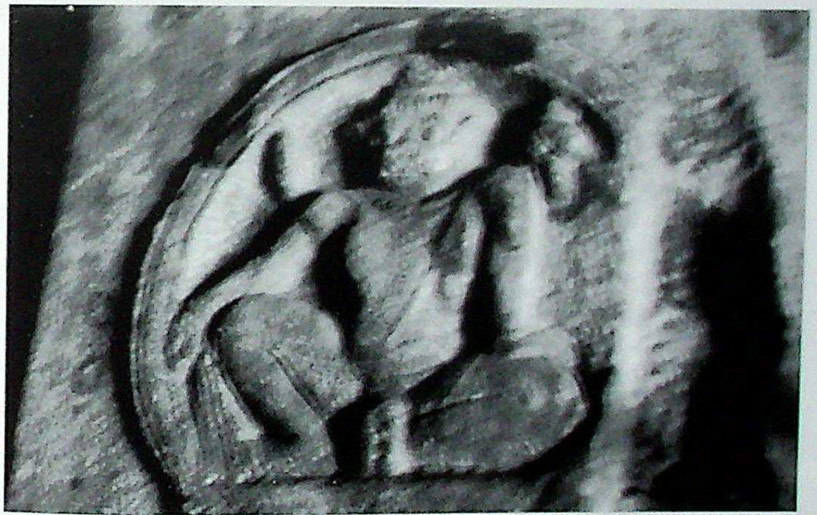

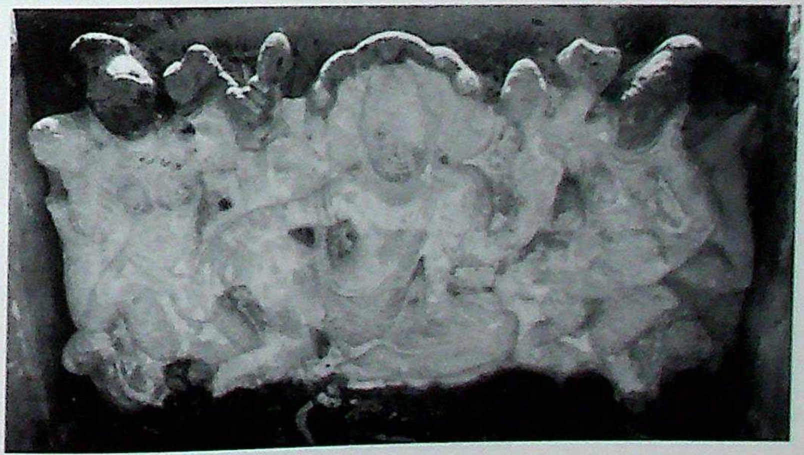

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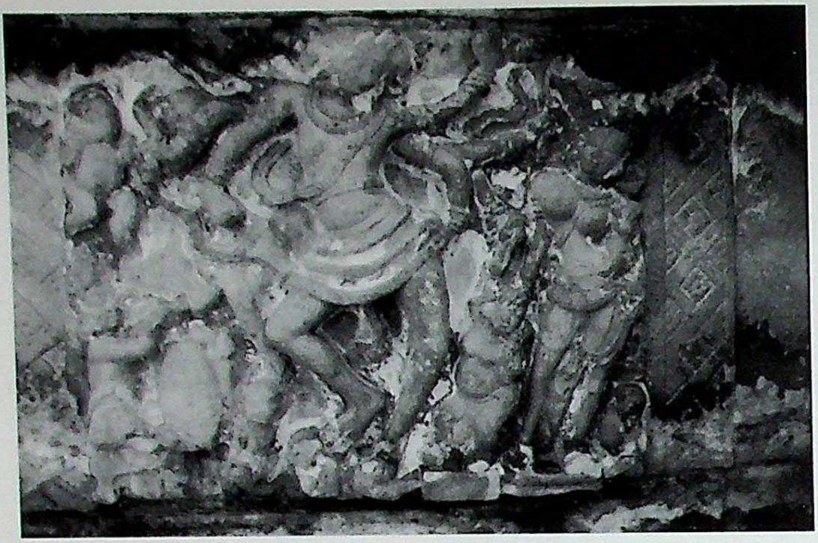

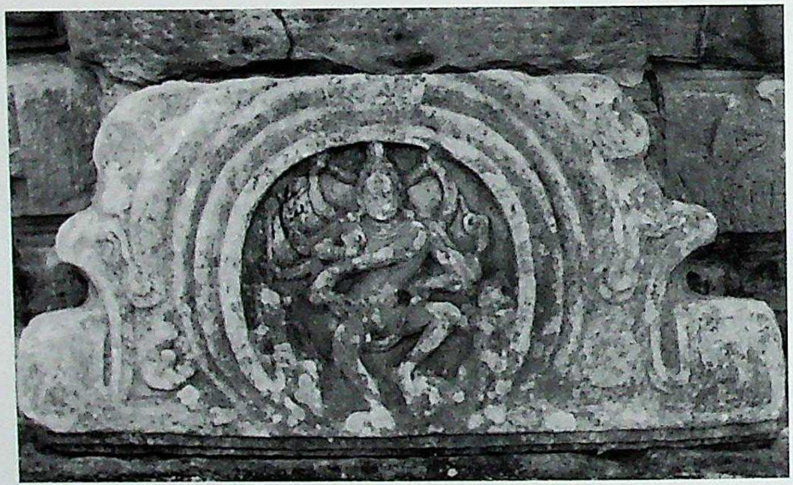

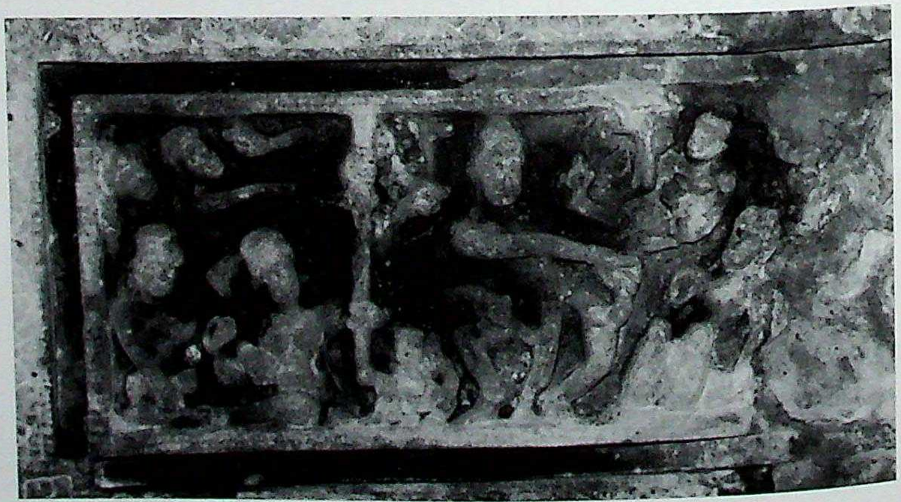

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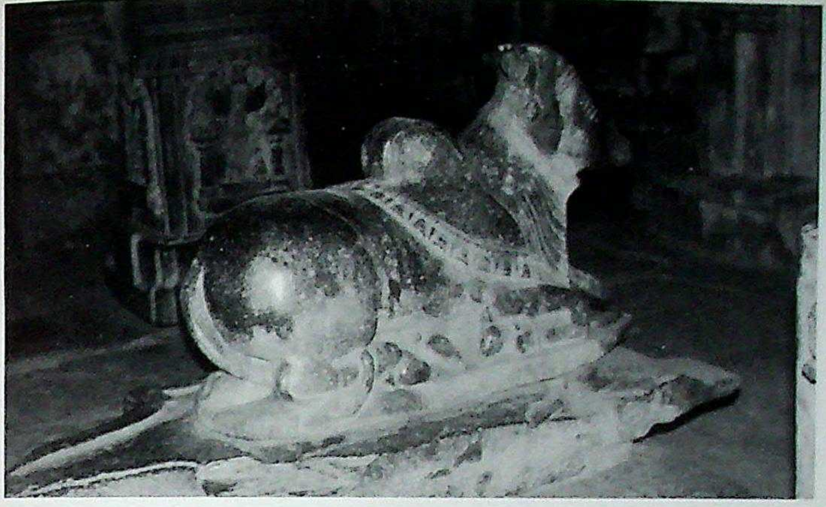

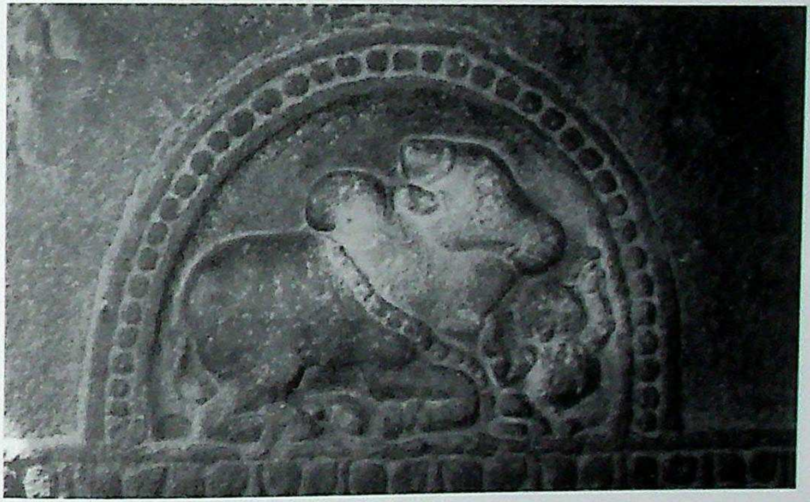

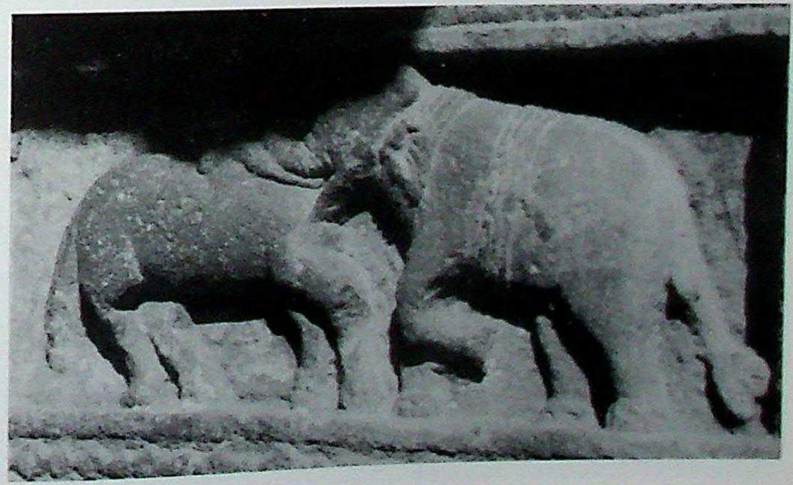

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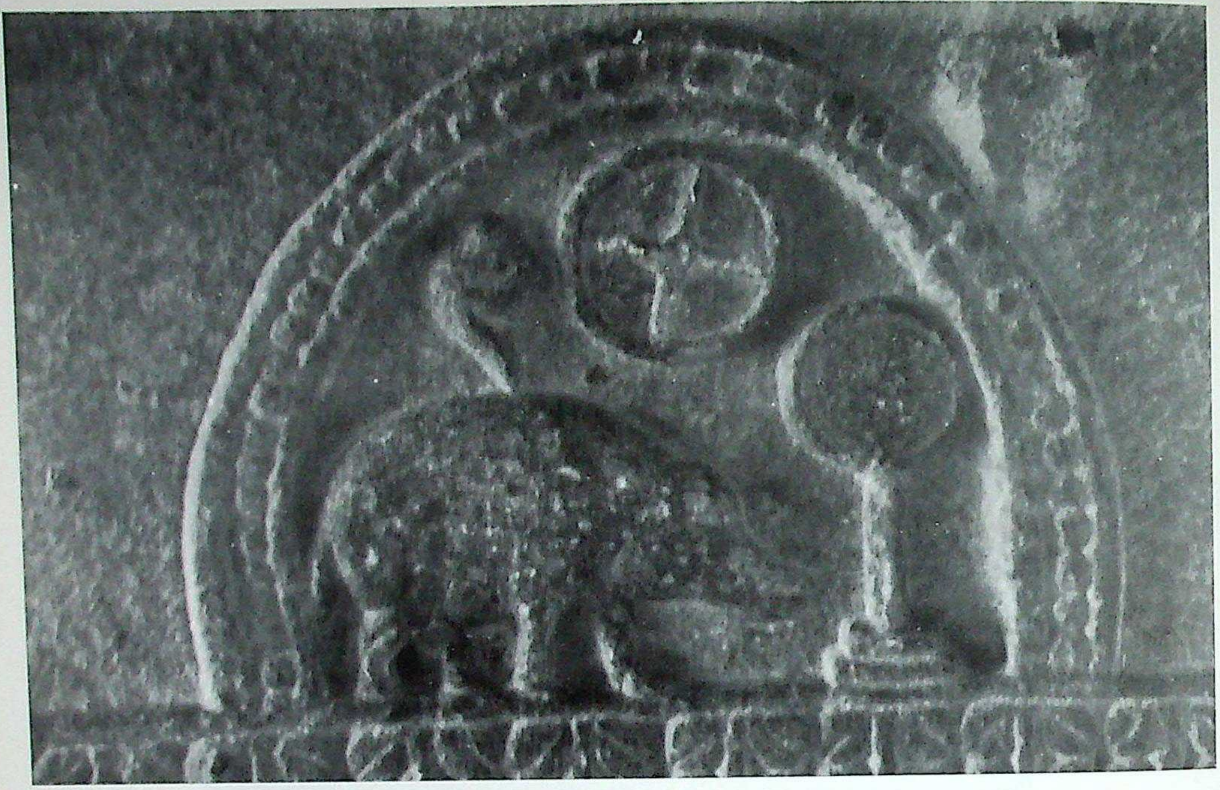

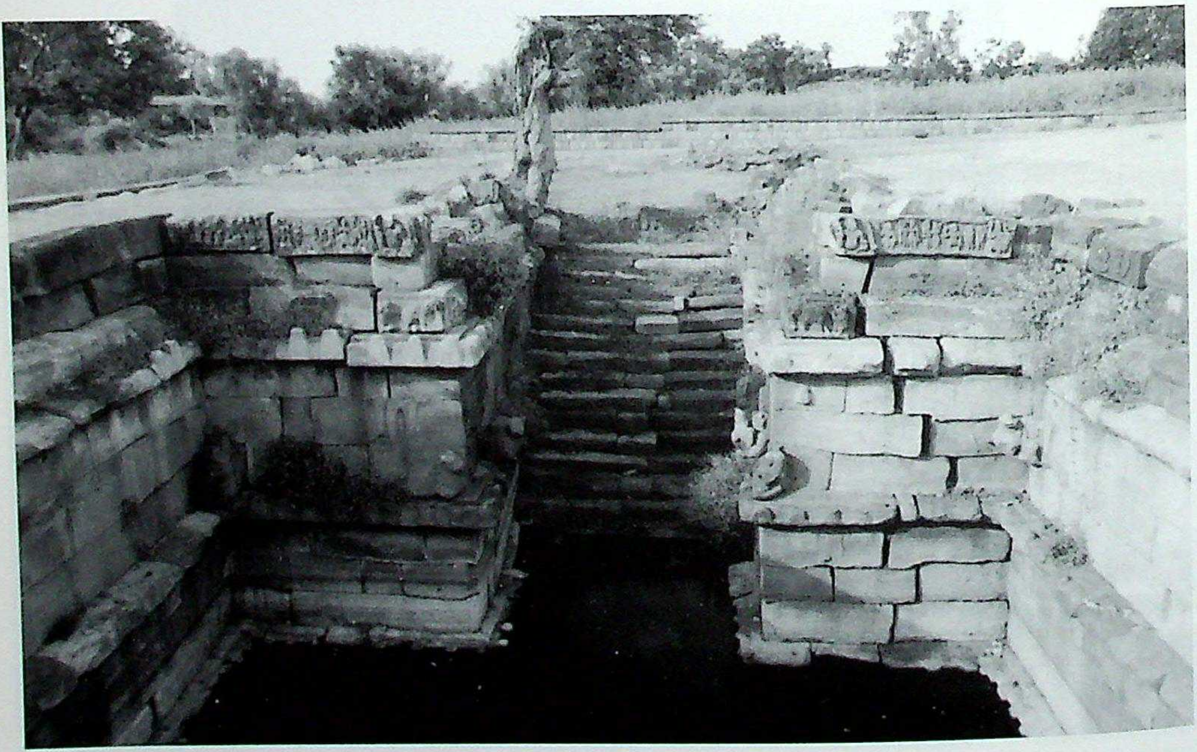

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RAJU KALIDOS

Assisted by
R.K.K. Rajarajan
R.K. Parthiban

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Preface

There is no need to introduce the present section of the book because everything has been told in the preface of the previous part. Suffice it to add that the other deities of the Hindu pantheon; e.g. *Dikpālakas, Navagrahas, ṛṣis,* Caṇḍikeśvara, *Garuḍa, Nāgas,* Nandi, *Rāsis* 'zodiacs', *Siddhas, Dvārapālakas, Śālabhañjikās* and so on have not received the adequate attention of scholars. In fact when I first began the project in 1984, Y. Subbarayalu of the Tamil University wanted me to undertake a project on these neglected themes than Viṣṇu, Śiva and Devī on which subject much work has been done. I was more interested in a re-research of the images in the rock-cut and structural temples of the age. That is why I undertook the present major work. K.R. Srinivasan who had an occasion to interact with me at the initial stage of my research was skeptical of a one-man project on the subject. He said that he with a team of his associates in the ASI could not dream of such a project. Finally, he agreed saying that the Vaiṣṇava images in the temples of the age maybe around 150 and okayed the project on Viṣṇu. His words came true. In my survey, I have reported not less than 200 images on Viṣṇu and there may be many more both in the field and museums. Prof. T.V. Pathy whom I used to meet in the Marathwada University every time in Ellora said it is an unwieldy project. Anyhow, I was able to complete the work in about eight years. I do not say I have covered the entire range of iconography within the geographical and chronological framework. In an article on Mahiṣāsuramardinī *(Acta Orientalia* 50, 1989), I counted 32 images while G.M. Tartakov and Vidya Dehejia have recorded 88 images. There may be several lapses that could be fulfilled in the long run. Those who comment on the present work, I hope will bring to light those monuments not within my reach. I assure my work will continue.

Research never stops at a particular point of time or space. It is an ongoing process. In a subject such as the present one, a single person could not do justice to the problem. Several scholars should come forward to fulfil an avowed ambition. "An increasing purpose runs through the ages".

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List of Illustrations

Photographic Credit (marked within parentheses)

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AIIS	American Institute of Indian Studies
FII	French Institute of Indology
RKKR	R.K.K. Rajarajan

Others by the author

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CHAPTER I

Sources

Sources bearing on Brahmā and the minor deities are available both in Sanskrit and Tamil. The Sanskritic data right from the *Ṛg* Vedic times has been presented in a number of books by scholars, e.g. A.A. Macdonell. The *Vedas, Itihāsas, Purāṇas* and canonical texts constitute the main sources of information. The Tamil texts from the early centuries of the Christian era contain lot of data, which is cryptic in nature but very valuable to obtain cross cultural picture of the deities under study. A broad perspective is obtained in the following account which traces the imagery of the deities from Caṅkam to the Tamil *bhakti* literature.

The list of minor deities includes *Dikpālakas* (directional deities), *Navagrahas* (planetary deities), Ādityas (twelve), *Aśvinis* (two), Rudras (eleven), *gaṇas* (eighteen), Nandi, *Garuḍa, devas* like *vidyādharas, gandharvas, kinnaras* and so on. Brahmā does not come under the minor list. He is one among the triple great deities of the Hindu pantheon, the Trinity, but his importance in both the myths and cults of the land is not upto the mark. Though practically one among the Trimūrtis, Brahmā occupies a secondary or tertiary place within the religion and is mostly subordinate to either Śiva or Viṣṇu.

BRAHMĀ

Among the list of the Vedic deities, Brahmā finds no important place. Brahman, the Universal Absolute, and Brahmā and *brāhmaṇa* are different. Brahmā is the God of Creation in popular Hinduism. There are various accounts of his birth and he is supposed to be *svayambū* 'self-born' and *aja* 'birthless'. He is also said to have born in a lotus which issued forth from the navel of Viṣṇu. He is called Padmaja and obviously inferior to Viṣṇu. He quarreled with his own creator, which led to a contest between the two. Śiva entered the fray and wanted to prove himself the Lord Superior. He arranged for a competition according to the terms of which one who discovers either the head or foot of Śiva should be the greatest. None was able to do it but Brahmā through a false evidence wanted to establish his greatness. It led to a punishment, which deprived him of his fifth head.

There is a story behind the polycephalous character of Brahmā. As Lord Creator he produced a female being, called Sarasvatī or Vāc or Gāyatrī, and looked at her voluptuously. She, out of shyness moved to different directions and Brahmā's eyes moved embracing her. A new face sprang from each direction that the Lord viewed the moving girl.[1]

The myths relating to the character and personality of Brahmā are narrated in several of the *mahā-* and *upa- purāṇas*. They are *Brahmā-*, *Brahmavaivarta-*, *Padma-*, *Kūrma-*, *Matsya-* and *Viṣṇudharmottara-*.

According to the *Brahma Purāṇa* the Lord was *svayambū* 'self-manifested' and *aja* 'unborn'. He was the Lord Nārāyaṇa himself. According to the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, Brahmā takes his origin from Kṛṣṇa who created Sarasvatī through his mouth and so she is called Vāc.

The *Purāṇas* list the epithets of the God. According to the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* the Lord is called Caturmukha 'four faced', Hamsavāhana '(he) of the swan vehicle', Jagatkarta 'Creator of the Cosmos', Jagatpati 'Lord of the Cosmos', Mahātapasvi 'great meditator', Mahāyogi 'Great Sage', Paṇḍita 'Scholar', Vidhi 'Fate', and so on. The *Padma Purāṇa* calls him Aja, Devagarbha '(born of) celestial uterus', Guru 'Teacher', Hiraṇyagarbha '(born of) the Cosmic uterus', Nitya 'Permanent', Padmagarbha '(born of) lotus uterus', Padmaja 'born in lotus', Padmayoni '(born of) lotus uterus', Paramātma 'Great Soul', Pitāmaha 'Grandfather', Pradhāṇapuruṣa 'Important Man', Ṛṣinamuttama 'Noble among Sages', Sṛṣṭikarta 'Creator', Svarnagarbha '(born of) golden uterus', Triveda 'the Triple Scripture', Vedagarbha '(born of) the uterus of Scripture', Yogavit 'Seed of penance' and so on. The *Kūrma Purāṇa* gives various names of the Lord like Ādipuruṣa 'Ancient Man', Devadeva 'God of Gods', Kuśadhvaja '(having) Flag of *kuśa* leaves', Mahābrahmā 'Great Creator', Prajāpati 'Father', Vedanidhi 'Treasure of the Scripture', Viśvatomukha 'Multiple face' and so on. The *Matsya Purāṇa* gives the following epithets: Amarānāmpitāmaha 'Grandfather of the Gods', Daṇḍadhara 'holder of the staff', Haṁsārūḍha 'seated on the swan', Kamalāsana 'seated on lotus' and so on. The *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* calls the Lord Kṛṣṇajīnāṁbara '(he who) wears the antelope-hide garment' and *Ṛg Veda* Sāntarūpa 'the peaceful one'.[2]

Brahmā was Progenitor of the human race and supposed to be the Father of mind-born *ṛṣis*. Marīci, Atri, Aṅgiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Krata, Pracata, Vasiṣṭha, Bhṛgu, Nārada and Dakṣa-Prajāpati were born to Brahmā. It is from these pioneers that the entire race of the gods and demons issued forth. Marīci was father of Kāśyapa who through Aditī gave birth to Sūrya, Vāmana (Viṣṇu's fifth *avatāra*), Indra and others. Atri was the father of Soma (moon-god). Aṅgiras gave birth to Bṛhaspati who through Ditī gave birth to Vāyu and the demons. From Pulastya came Visravas and through him Kubera. Then comes Vinatā who gave birth to Garuḍa and Aruṇa. Vinatā's sister was Kadru and nine others. Kadrū also married the same husband, who took the hand of Vinatā, and gave birth to the *nāgas*. Pracata was the father of Varuṇa. Bhṛgu married Khyati. She gave birth to Lakṣmī who took the hand of Dharma. Dakṣa was a Prajāpati who gave birth to Satī and sixty others. Satī took the hand of Śiva.[3]

The iconographical features of Brahmā are better told in canonical books like the *Mayamata, Bṛhatsaṁhita* and *Aparājitapṛccha*. According to the *Mayamata* (36:2-7, 28b) Brahmā is *caturbhuja* and *caturmukha*. He is pure golden in colour and wears a headgear, resembling a diadem. He wears *kuṇḍalas, kaṅkanas* and *mālās*. His garment is of *kṛṣṇajīna* sent around the body in *upavīta* fashion. The right hands hold the *akṣamālā* and *kuśa* or *sruk* and *sruva*. The left hands hold the *āgyapātra* and *kuśa* or exhibit *abhaya* and *varada mudrās*. He is attended by Sāvitrī and Bhāratī to the right and left respectively. He is attended by *ṛṣis*. *Haṁsa* serves as the vehicle if the Lord is seated, otherwise he stands on the *padmapīṭha*. The Anantaśāyī form of Viṣṇu includes Dhātṛ (Brahmā) who is seated on a *padma*, springing from the Primeval Creator's (Viṣṇu) *nābhi* 'naval'.[4]

The *Bṛhatsaṁhita* (58:41) speaks of a simple form; seated on a *padmapīṭha* with two hands, one holding the *kamaṇḍalū*. He is *caturmukha*.

The *caturmukha* and *caturbhuja* types are narrated in the *Agni* and *Bhāgavata Purāṇas*. The *Viṣṇudharmottara* (44:5) speaks of a seated form, the Lord being placed on a *padmāsana*, drawn by seven swans. He wears a *jaṭāmakuṭa* and holds the *akṣamālā, kamaṇḍalū* and has the other hands in *dhyāna-mudrā* attitude.

The *Aparājitapṛccha* (214:1) and *Rūpamaṇḍana* (2:6-7) speak of four types of four-faced images. The *caturmukhas* are supposed to represent the *caturvedas, caturyugas* and *caturvarṇas*. The four types are called Kamalāsana, Virañci, Pitāmaha and Brahmā. The emblems attributed to the Lord include *akṣamālā, kamaṇḍalū, sruk, sruva* and *puṣtaka*. The *Samaraṅganasūtradhāra* (77:3) and *Matsya Purāṇa* (259:41-2) make him *daṇḍadhara*. According to the *Rūpamaṇḍana* (2:7) the Lord wears a *jayamālā* (garland of victory).[5]

Among the *śilpa* texts *Śrītattvanidhi* presents a copious account of Brahmā. The text in its fourth section called *Brahmatattvanidhi* talks of five types of mūrtis called Adhya Brahmā, Lokapāla Brahmā, Prajāpati Brahmā, Vidhi Brahmā and Viśvakarma Brahmā. Another type called Caturmukha is also described. The source for all these forms is a text called *Śaivāgama*. Caturmukha is a form in which the Lord is endowed with four faces and four hands. The right hands hold the *japamālā* and *sruva*. The left hands hold the *kamaṇḍalū* and *puṣtaka*. He is seated on a *padmāsana* and has the eyes closed in meditation. He wears the *yajñopavīta*, an upper garment, *jaṭāmakuṭa* and other ornaments. The Lord is attended by Sarasvatī who is *caturbhuja* and *sakalābharaṇadhārī*. She stands in *samapāda* attitude. She is *saumya* and pure white in colour. The hands bear the *puṣtaka, japamālā, vīṇa* and *kamaṇḍalū*.

The Pañca-Brahmās constitute the main group in *Śrītattvanidhi*. Adhya-Brahmā is a teacher who is *saumya* and *caturbhuja*. Seated in *padmāsana*, he wears the *kṛṣṇajīna*. He is seated on a lotus, pulled by seven gooses. He holds the *japamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū* in right hands. Lokapāla-Brahmā is supposed to be a guardian of the worlds, the Lokadeva. He is seated on a *padmāsana* and has four faces. He shines like the sun and holds a *japamālā* in the hand, other features being the same as in the previous form. Prajāpati-Brahmā has the *haṁsavāhana*. He is not *caturmukha*, which means the Lord is unicephalous according to the editor of the *Śrītattvanidhi*.[6] Sāvitrī is seated on his left thigh. Vidhi-Brahmā's body shines like the morning sun. He has two hands, otherwise ten or twelve. Viśvakarma Brahmā is one who has four faces, four legs and four hands. He wears white garments and is *sāntasvarūpi* 'embodiment of tranquility'. Two of the hands hold the *japamālā* and *puṣtaka*. The other two hands are held in *añjalibandha* and raised above the head like a *padma* 'lotus'.

The *Śrītattvanidhi* in its section on *Śivatattvanidhi* includes Brahmā in forms, e.g. Kalyāṇasundaramūrti. The form comes under the *pañcaviṁśatilīlāmūrtis* according to the *Kāraṇāgama*. The frame of the subject includes Girijā, Brahmadeva, Menakā and Himavan within its format. Brahmā is to be in front of Śiva. He is *caturmukha* and *caturbhuja*. He holds his usual emblems in *parahastas* (i.e., the *kamaṇḍalū* and *akṣamālā*). He has a smiling face and is seated on a *padmāsana*. He wears the *yajñasūtra, uttarīya, kamaṇḍalū* and *japamālā*. The *agnikuṇḍa* in front of the Lord has to be fashioned with three *mekhalas, nābhis* and *yonis*. It has to be a *sakalalakṣaṇa-sadurasya-kuṇḍa*. The *agni* (*jvāla*) emanating from the fire pit should be with five *śikhas* (uplifted flames). The Lord holds the *puṣtaka* and *sruva* in his front arms and is engaged in conducting the *agnicārya* on the occasion of Śiva's wedding with Girijā.

Brahmā appears for the first time in later Vedic literature but shows stages of a steady decline in course of time.[7] No cult seems to have developed after him. Though two of the *purāṇas* go after his name, he is not the principal character in either of them and occupies only a secondary or tertiary place within the Hindu pantheon. His status in Tamil literature since the dawn of Christian era is not important. He fails to appear in earlier texts like the *Tolkāppiyam*. The *Paripāṭal*, Twin Epics, and the *bhakti* literature of the Āḻvārs and Nāyaṉmār present a good peep into his character and attributes.

Brahmā in *Paripāṭal* (5:22) is invoked with few epithets. He is called Ātiantaṉaṉ, i.e., Ādibrāhmaṇa (cf. *Ādipuruṣa* of *Kūrma Purāṇa, supra*). In most of the criptic allusions to the Lord's name, the emphasis is on the lotus. He is called *Malarmicaimutalvaṉ* 'the Primeval being appearing in flower' (cf. *Kamalāsana* of the *Padma Purāṇa, supra*) (*Pari*. 8:3). He is said to be seated on a burning lotus, *erimalarttāmarai iṟai* (*Pari*. 9:4). The simple form of the name is *pūvaṉ* (1:46), one on the flower. Viṣṇu was the father of the God who was born on a lotus, *tāmaraip pūviṉuṭ piṟantōṉuṉ tātai* (*Pari*. 3:13). The most beautiful description of Brahmā on flower is found in the annexure to *Paripāṭal*, called *Paripāṭal-tiraṭṭu*. The last verse under the series is in praise of the city of Maturai. To quote,

Māyōṉ koppūḻ malarnta tāmaraip
Puvoṭu puriyuñ cīrūr pūviṉ
Itaḻakattaṉaiyateruvam itaḻakat
tarumpokuṭṭaṉaittē aṇṇalkōyil ...

Pūviṉuṭ piṟantōṉ nāviṉutpiṟanta
nāṉmaṟaik kēḷvi (*Paripāṭal-tiraṭṭu*, v. 7)

'The omphalos lotus of Māyōṉ (Viṣṇu) is like the city of Maturai. The petals are the streets and the bunch of pollen grains in centre are like the King's temple (i.e., the palace). The one born in the flower (i.e., Brahmā) is the ordainer of the *Vedas* through his tongue'.

Another important reference is to a lute called *teyvappiramaṉ* (*Pari*. 19:40). The verse describes a picturesque scenery in the temple of Murukaṉ at Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam wherein a number of devotees are gathered to celebrate the Lord's greatness. Some of them, it is said, play with a special type of lute, called *teyvappiramam*, to produce a melodious music. It seems that there was a type of lute called after the name of Brahmā.[8] It may be akin to one that Nārada, son of Brahmā, carries in his hands.

Among the Twin Epics, the *Cilappatikāram* is the earliest in point of time. There are few important references to Brahmā. The Lord is called *pūmēlōṉ* and *vētamutalvaṉ* (*Cilampu*. 2:12:8, 2:14:1. 48). Viṣṇu is called the architect who ordained Brahmā. The Lord's naval is compared to the lotus flower, *malarkkamala unti* (*Cilampu*. 2:17:1. 121). Another important reference is to a dance performed by Śiva in the presence of Brahmā. To quote

Tērmuṉ niṉṟa ticaimukaṉ kāṇa
Pārati āṭiya viyaṉ pāṇṭaraṅkamum (*Cilampu*. 1:6:11. 44-6)

Brahmā is called Ticaimukaṉ (Skt. Dikmukha) who was standing in front of a chariot when Śiva performed the dance called *Pāṇṭaraṅkam*.

The *Maṇimēkalai* is practically the second part of the First Epic, *Cilappatikāram* (for subject matter see Vol. III, Chap. I), and deals with story of the heroine, Maṇimēkalai, and presents interesting details about cults of the age. The work may be assigned to the 6th century A.D. Brahmā is called *ūḻimutalvaṉ*, first primeval being. It strikingly compares with the statement of another Caṅkam work, called *Kalittokai* (no. 1), which makes Brahmā the grand old who was born at the time of cosmic genesis. To quote: *Toṭaṅkaṟkaṇ tōṉṟiya mutiyavaṉ*, the epithet *mutiyavaṉ* compares with Pitāmaha. He is one associated with the creation of the gods and human beings. He is seated on a red flower. The *Maṇimēkalai* (*Patikam* 11. 28-29) says,

Teyvakkaruvum ticaimukak karuvum
Cemmalar mutiyōn ceyta aṉṉāḷ

He is called the Scriptural Primeval Being, *mutumaṟai mutalvaṉ* (*Mani*. 13:1.94).

Brahmā is said to be the son of Viṣṇu, who bears the *śaṅkha* and *cakra* in his hands. To quote (*Mani*. 13:11.57-8):

Poṉṉaṇi nēmi valaṅkoḷ caṅkarakkai
Maṉṉuyir mutalvaṉ makaṉ

In another interesting passage, the *Maṇimekalai* (6: 11.176-77) talks of four types of formless (*arūpa*) Brahmās and sixteen with a form. To quote,

> *Nālvakai marapiṉarūpap piramanum*
> *Nānal vakaiyiṉu rūpap piramanum*

The four Arūpa-Brahmās are supposed to inhabit the four worlds and the sixteen (4 x 4) Rūpa-Brahmās the sixteen worlds.[9]

Another important perspective of the data supplied by the *Maṇimēkalai* is that it talks about a system of philosophy called Brahmavāda and its adherent, Brahmavādi. The XXVII part of the book deals with the various philosophical systems known to the age, entitled *Camayakkaṇakkar-tantiraṅkēṭṭa-kātai*. Piramavāti is the one listed; others being Caivavāti (Śaiva), cult of Nārāyaṇa (Vaiṇavavāti-Vaiṣṇavism), Vētavāti (Vedavādi), Ājīvikas, Śāṅkhya, Vaiṣeśika, Bhūtavāda and Nikandhavāda. According to the Brahmavādis the world is the outcome of a big egg laid by their God, Brahmā (*Mani*. 27: 97-7). It is also interesting to note that the *Maṇimēkalai* (27: 1.289) talks of *aivakaiccamayam* 'five religions' and not six as we note in the next stratum of literature in Tamil.[10] What is important is that the *Maṇimēkalai* talks of Brahmavāda to be sure about a group of its followers.

The authors of the Śaiva *bhakti* literature, the Nāyaṉmār, in their literary masterpiece, called *Tēvāram*, note several of the epithets of Brahmā, which help to form an idea of his imagery. The status of Brahmā in the huge corpus of literature is secondary or tertiary, Śiva being the supreme Lord of the Śaivas. Many of his names are related to any one of his qualities. He is quite often called by the common name Piramaṉ (Brahmā) (*Tēvāram* 1: *Patikam* 2: v. 9; 1:24:9, 1:120:9, 2:160:9, 7:20:9). Some of the epithets point out his four faced aspect. He is called *Nāṉmukaṉ* (Skt. Caturmukha 1:6:9, 2:160:9, 2:176:9, 1:106:9, 1:44:9, 1:53:9, 4:13:4, 7:18:9, 7:20:9), Tikkamar-nāṉmukaṉ 'four faces directed to the cardinal directions' (3:267:9), Ticai-nāṉmukaṉ (Skt. Dikcaturmukha 1:84:9), Caturmukaṉ (Skt. Caturmukha3:310:4) and so on. The most popular among the epithets is the one, which associates the Lord with the lotus. He is called *malaraṉ* (1:1:1, 5:132:4), *malaravaṉ* (3:276:9), *malarōṉ* (3:367: all hymns), *taṇṭāmaraiyāṉ* (1:1:9), *malarmēlayaṉ* 'Ayaṉ sitting on flower' (1:13:9), *vaṇṇamalarāṉ* '(he who sits on a) colourful flower' (1:86:9), Kamalattayaṉ 'Āyaṉ on lotus' (1:41:9), *taṇṭamartāmaraiyāṉ* '(he who) sits on the stalked lotus' (1:43:9), Paṅkayattāṉ '(he of) the lotus' (3:77:6), *veḷḷattāmaraiyāṉ* '(he of the) water lotus' (1.58:9), *paṉimalarōṉ* '(he of the) dewed flower' (3:350:9) and so on. The Lord's character as an anchorite is stressed in epithets like Maraiyavaṉ. Noted among them are Aṇṭamaraiyānavaṉ 'Lord of the Cosmic Scripture' (1:5:10), *Payilum Maraiyāḷaṉ* '(he who) learns (or teaches ?) the Scripture' (1:82:3) and so on. In a rare epithet the Lord is called 'Master of Destiny', Vitiyaṉ (1:28:9). The Lord who bears the *puṣtaka* is called *ēṭuṭaiyaṉ*, *eṭu* 'book' (1:1:1, 1:103:1). He who bears the *kamaṇḍalū* or *kuṇḍika* is called *kuṇṭikaiyavar* (3:346:9). He is golden hued and so called *poṉṉira-nāṉmukaṉ* 'golden coloured Caturmukha' (3:265:9). Seated on a bird, he is called Paravaiyār 'he of the bird' (3:344:9). He is also called *ticaimukamuṭaiya-kō* 'king who has faces in cardinal directions' (4:26:10). The great one (*Periyaṉ Piramaṉ*), he is called Vētakītaṉ (Vedagīta 1:163:1).

Many of the above epithets are associated with Brahmā who is part and parcel of Liṅgodbhava. Especially, those verses, bearing no. 9 in each *patikan* 'decad' belong to this category. It is to point out the secondary status held by Brahmā within the religious traditions of the *bhakti* age.

Another important myth recorded in the *Tēvāram* pertains to the Brahmaśirascchedaka event. Lord Śiva not only decapitated Brahmā's fifth head but also carried the *kāpāla* in his hand. There is a beautiful reference to the decapitation of Brahmā who was seated on a flower (*Māmalarmēl Piramaṉ ciramarinta* 1:105:7). *Aṟuttu* and *veṭṭi*, both meaning 'cut', are the words used to denote Śiva's function in the context (*Piramaṉār ciramaṟuttu* 3:347:5, *Ayaṉ talaiveṭṭi* 5:199:2). One who cut the head of the one who was born on a lotus is called Kapāli (6:300:1). Śiva accrued *brahmahatti* by doing so and was wandering as Bhikṣāṭana, holding a bowl, which was none other than Brahmā's cut-head (*Piramaṉ talai-ēnti* 1:71:3). In other words, the head of Brahmā served as the begging bowl for Śiva (*Malarōṉṟaṉ talai-kalaṉāka* 1:98:8). The bowl is also called *talaiyōṭu* (4:5:6) or *kapālakkalaṉ* (4:2:7), both meaning (begging) bowl of skull or head.

The Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* literature of the Āḻvārs[11] takes Brahmā into consideration whenever Śeṣaśāyī is the subject-matter of enumeration. Viṣṇu in the context is called the father of Brahmā who created the latter in a lotus emanating from his own navel. The *Periya Tirumoḻi* refers to the aspect in several of the hymns (*Malarmicaimēl Ayaṉ* 2:8:1, 3:4:9, 4:2:9, 5:4:1). Viṣṇu is called the Father of Caturmukha (*Periya Tirumoḻi* 7:10:7). Viṣṇu is said to have taught the *Vedas* to Caturmukha who is seated in a lotus, springing forth from his navel (*Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam* 1:33). Viṣṇu, the Virāṭ Puruṣa, swallows the entire Cosmos at the time of final *pralaya* 'deluge', including Brahmā, and reproduces the latter through the lotus born in his navel (*Nāṉmukaṉ Tiruvantāti* v. 87). The *Periya Tirumaṭal* (11. 1-20) consists of a beautiful description of Śeṣaśāyī who gives birth to Brahmā in his *nābhi* and is attended by a cavalcade of demigods and goddesses.

Inscriptions, including invocatory verses, in praise of Brahmā and his consort, Bhāratī or Sarasvatī, belong to the later medieval periods. The earliest is dated in *Śaka* 855 of Govinda V which extols the melodious *Sāma* songs of Brahmā whose heart is happy with the completion of creation and the company of Sarasvatī. To quote:

> *Om Jayaṁti Ura(Bra)hmaṇaḥ sargga-niṣpatti-ātmanaḥ*
> *Sarasvati-vri (?) tānaṁdā madhurās-sāma-gītayaḥ* (*IA*, XII, p. 249).

The Rewa Copper Plates, dated in *Vikrama* 1253, invoke Brahmā and Bhāratī while the patron of the grant is called worshipper of Maheśvara (*IA*, XVII, pp. 227-28). Some of the inscriptions invoke the Trimūrtis, including Brahmā. The Nadol Plates of Mahārājaputra Kirtipāla, dated in *Vikrama* 1218, has an invocation as follows:

Om Svasti Sriyai bhavantu vo deva Brahmaśrīdharaśaṅkaraḥ(*IA*, XL, p. 146)

The Nāgpūr stone inscription, dated in *Vikrama* 1161, invokes Bhāratī as follows:

Om Om Namo Bhāratyai (*EI*, II, pp. 182, 183)

It invokes the blessings of Viṣṇu, Śiva and Brahmā, the Trimūrtis. It may be noted here that Bhāratyai is one among the epithets of Durgā as appearing in her *Aṣṭottaram*. The Goharwa Plates of Karṇadeva, dated in A.D. 1047, has an invocation to Brahmā and Brāhmī (*EI*, XI, p. 140).

MINOR DEITIES

The minor deities of the Hindu pantheon present a composite picture of Vedic and pre-Vedic or aboriginal folk deities. Few of them like Indra, Sūrya and Agni were held in high esteem during the *Ṛg* Vedic period to such an extent that they are considered to be the Trinity of the times.[12] The Vedic deities were Varuṇa, Pṛthvi, Dyaus, Indra, the *Maruts*, Vāyu, Tvastri, the Ribhus, Agni, Soma, Aditi, the Ādityas, Vivasvat, Sūrya, Uṣas, Sāvitrī, Rātri, the *Aśvins*, Rudra and Viṣṇu. Agni was the "vital spark" and Soma the "vital fluid".[13] In course of time, the Vedic deities getting absorbed in an alien cultural stream, lost their identity and several of them their status. The pre-Aryan, Dravidian elements, added to the rhythm of integration in such a way that "their resurgence was one of the reasons for the decline of the Aryan gods".[14] Nandi, *Garuḍa, Nāga, Mayūra* are few of the local elements, which later became the important demi-gods of the pantheon. Among the Vedic deities, Agni and Indra were important. They commanded a high status. Rudra and Viṣṇu as the strider were at lower level. In course of time, the lower gods rose to the supreme position as a result of their identification and mingling with local deities and the high-born Vedic gods relegated to the background. Few of them like Indra, Agni, Varuṇa, Sūrya, Candra, the *Aśvinis* were there. Sāvitrī and Uṣas continued to receive some importance, fitted within the framework of a newly emerging *bhakti* cult.

Dikpālakas

The *dikpālakas* are eight in number and so called *Aṣṭadikpālakas* who are regents of the eight directions. They are Indra (east), Agni (southeast), Yama (south), Nirṛtti (south-west), Varuṇa (west), Vāyu (northwest), Kubera (north) and Īśāna (northeast). The oldest in the group are Agni, Yama, Varuṇa and Indra.[15] Vālmīki in his *Rāmāyaṇa* notes four, viz., Indra, Yama, Varuṇa and Kubera. The *Mahābhārata* notes the same list and brings Agni into the picture in place of Kubera.[16] The *Manusmṛti* brings the *grahas* Sūrya and Candra (Soma) and lists Agni, Anila or Vāyu, Vittapati or Kubera, Apapati or Varuṇa and Yama among the *dikpālakas*. The *Gobhilagṛhasūtra* accounts for ten and includes Vāsuki for *pātāḷa* (netherworld) and Brahmā for *ākāśa* (sky).[17]

Indra, regent of the east, was the aerial god of thunderstorm in the Vedic pantheon who slaughtered demons with his light. A.A. Macdonnel lists him under atmospheric gods and notes the anthropomorphic descriptions found in the *Vedas*. His weapon was the *vajra* who also wielded the *dhanus, bāṇa* and *aṅkuśa*.[18] As a regent he is endowed with two arms who possesses the weapon, *vajra*. His arms are huge who wears ornaments like *kirīṭamakuṭa, kuṇḍalas, mālās, kaṅkaṇas* and red garments. Sacī is his wife. It is according to the *Mayamata* (36: 136-38). According to the *Aparājitapṛccha* Indra holds the *vajra, aṅkuśa* and *kuṇḍi* (pitcher). One of the hands is in *varadamudrā*. His vehicle is the *gaja*, called Airāvata. The *Śrītattvanidhi*, citing the *Nṛsiṁhaprasāda*, deals with *daśadiks* and their presiding goddesses. It is an interesting account according to which the *pūrvadik* 'east' is guarded by a goddess who is red in colour, has the *gajavāhana* and carries a child in hand. The same text deals with the *Aṣṭadikpālakas*, citing the *Bhaṭṭabhāskarīya*. It deals with Indra who is 1000 eyed and yellow in colour. He is *caturbhuja* and holds the *vajra* and *aṅkuśa*. The other two hands show the *abhaya* and *varada mudrās*. He is the consort of Sacī and seated on Airāvata. He wears ornaments made of gems.

Indra is called Vēntaṉ 'king' in ancient Tamil literature. He is the presiding deity of the *marutam* tract of land and was very important. The Twin Epics present a good peep into the aspects pertaining to his status in the Tamil society. The *Cilappatikāram* (2:23:192) calls him *amorarkkuaracaṉ* 'king of the gods'. Lord of the celestial, *amarar-kōmāṉ*, his weapon was the *vacciram* (Skt. *vajra, Cilampu.* 2:23:50). The Twin Epics deal with a great festival undertaken in Indra's honour in the port city of the Cōḻas, Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṇam. Called Intiraviḻā 'Festival of Indra', in both the epics there are two separate *kātais* 'books' dealing with the festival. It is said to have been celebrated for 28 days with all pomp and pageantry. The *Maṇimēkalai* adds that the city of Pukār or Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṇam was destroyed by the sea when the festival of Indra was stopped. There were temples for Indra, called Vaccirakkōṭṭam (*Cilampu.* 1:5:141, 1:9:12; *Mani.* 1:27) and Veḷyāṉaikkōṭṭam (*Cilampu.* 1:9:19, Jeyapriya 2004). All these prove the fact that the cult of Indra was deep rooted in the Tamil country.

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* speaks of the honours offered to Indra, which were stopped at the instance of Kṛṣṇa, leading to the former's wrath and his efforts to destroy Gokula. Similarly, we find in the Tamil epics the prototype of the myth wherein the festival of Indra is described in great detail. The *Maṇimēkalai* (1. *Viḻāvaraikātai*) traces the history of the festival which was instituted by a Cōḻa king, called Toṭitōṭcempiyaṉ, and conducted without fail each year in the month of *Cittirai* (Skt. *Chaitra* March-April). The time honoured festival, which was conducted punctilliously was ordered to be celebrated by the reigning king, Kiḷḷivaḷavaṉ, at a time when the heroine of the epic, Maṇimēkalai, was preparing to renounce worldly life and get herself recruited into the Buddhist order at the instance of her mother, Mātavi. The custom was to announce the arriving festival to be celebrated for 28 days. It was done by a hereditary class of state announcers, called *vaḷḷuvar* 'soothsayer', who removed the trumpet from the *Vaccirakkōṭṭam*, and carried it through the streets as placed on an elephant back, followed by caparisoned warriors, horses, chariots and elephants. The *vaḷḷuvaṉ's* message from the king was to sweep the streets and public squares and fill them with fresh sand. Fresh plants of plantain, sugarcane and areca were to be implanted to decorate the city. Lamps were to be set up and pillars decked with strings of pearls and garlands to be planted. The priests in temples were to conduct their services without fail and the preachers of righteousness to attend to their duties. Religious debates and public meetings were to be conducted. The festival was to be celebrated amidst great pomp and pageantry without any quarrel and brawl as the city was to be visited by the gods from the heavens to witness the events. The *Cilappatikāram* (5. *Intiraviḻāvūrettakātai*) adds to the account of the festivals by saying that the reigning king visited the banks of the river, Kāviri, followed by his officers, ministers and servants. It was to declare open the chain of events. The sacred water, collected from the river, was carried by young men and women of the royal family to the temple of Indra. The image of the God was given a new bath amidst the play of musical instruments and cheers from the public. The concluding ceremonies of the festival took place on the seashore with the participants taking a dip at a place where Kāviri found its confluence with the sea.[19]

Besides the big festival, undertaken in honour of Indra, what is significant is the temples going after the names of *vacciram* (*vajra* 'thunderbolt') and *veḷyāṉai* ('white elephant', Airāvata). It seems that the temples of Indra in those times were known by these names, perhaps due to the fact that the personified *vajra* and the zoomorphic elephant were housed in the *garbhagṛhas* and adored. It was because he was considered to be the God of thunderstorms, lightning, the clouds and the rains (*Kalittokai* 98).[20]

The myths of Indra were popular with the society and there were painted pavilions in temples which housed paintings on the subject. According to the *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* (11. 155-59) Indra was one who possessed 1000 eyes due to his illegal intercourse with Ahalyā, wife of sage Gautama.[21] He was renowned for having conducted hundreds of sacrifices (T. *vēḷvi*) (*Mani. Patikam* 33) and mounted the four-tusked elephant, the Airāvata. The temple for Murukaṉ at Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam was famous for its *eḻuttunilai-maṇṭapam* 'painted pavilion' where there were paintings relating to the episode of Indra's incest with Ahalyā, Gautama's curse, the cursed stone and so on (*Pari.* 19: 46-57).

There were also some folk customs, which centred around the personality of Indra. The rainbow was considered to be an emblem of Indra, *vaccirattāṉ vāṉavil* (*Pari.* 18:39). According to the *Maṇimēkalai* (11: 11.88-89) people used to eat only after paying homage to Indra. It is called *intiracciṟappu* 'homage to Indra'. Warriors, it was believed, proceeded to the world of Indra after death. The Indraloka is called *Poṉṉakar* 'golden city', i.e., Amarāvati (*Mani.* 1:41).

From the above account what could be specified is that the King of Gods or Celestials, called Vēntaṉ in Tamil, was much honoured who was the presiding deity of one among the five stratified regions of the country.

Agni in the order of directions is regent of the southeast. In Vedic mythology, he was the God of terrestrial fire who dispelled demons of darkness with his lightning. He was the personified 'spark', needed for keeping alive the *pañcāgnis*.

In iconography Agni is usually identified by his goat vehicle. He wields the *śakti* and holds the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū*. At times he is characterised by the beard. According to Hemādri, Agni is surrounded by a forest of *jvāla* 'sparks', and carries the *triśūla* and *akṣamālā*. Svāhā, one who swallows offerings, is his consort, seated on his left thigh who holds a *ratnaghaṭa* 'pot of gems'.

According to the *Mayamata* (36: 139-40) Agni is an old man. He stands on a semicircular pedestal. He bears a golden beard. The hands hold the pitcher and *akṣamālā*. His mount is the ram. He is bound by the *yogapaṭṭa*. Svāhā stands to his right.

The *Śrītattvanidhi* (1:4:80) citing the *Śaivāgama*, talks of Dejodevata who is part of the *Pañcabhūtasvarūpadevatas*. The Lord is marked by seven flames and is golden in colour. He is seated on a goat and is seven handed. He bears the *śakti* and other weapons. Svāhā is present by his side. The *Daśadikdevatas* of the *Nṛsiṁhaprasāda* speaks of a feminine Āgneyadikdevatā. She has a big body and the *karaṇḍapakṣī* (water hen) for her vehicle (*Śrītattvanidhi* 1:4:84). Agni, accounted under the Aṣṭadikpālakas of the *Śrītattvanidhi* (1:4:97), quoted from *Pūrvabhāga* of *Siṅkapaṭṭīya*, is seven handed, four horned and seven tongued. He is *dvimukha* and *tripāda*. Seated in *sukhāsana*, he is attended by Svāhā and Svadhā to the right and left respectively. He holds the *śakti*, rice food, *sruk* and *sruva* in right hands. The left hands hold the *tomara, cauri* and *āgyapātra*. The headgear consists of *jaṭābandha* while the *dvaja* 'flag' is smoky in colour. He is marked by a big belly.

According to the *Aparājitapṛccha* Agni is Huḍāsana. His vehicle is *huḍa* or *meṣa* 'ram'. He holds the *śakti, mṛṇāla* (lotus) and *kamaṇḍalū*. One of the hands is in *varadamudrā*. The mark of distinction is five flames.

There are few references to Agni in early Tamil literature. The *Paripāṭal* (5:57) calls him *Aṉalaṉ* 'the fire'. He is accounted under the five cosmic elements, the *pañcabhūtas* (*Paripāṭal* 3:4). They are *tī vaḷi vicumpu nilam nīr* 'fire, wind, ether, soil and water'. It is in the *Cilappatikāram* (2:21:49-51, 137) that Agni receives some importance. The heroine of the epic, Kaṇṇaki, before setting fire to Maturai summons the Fire God, *eriyaṅki vāṉavaṉ*, to her presence. Agni appears before her in disguise as a *brāhmaṇa*, blue in colour, wearing red garments whose teeth were milk white in colour. It is stated that the people adored Agni because he destroyed evil and purified impure things. The allegory behind the destruction of Maturai by fire may be that the wrath of Kaṇṇaki destroyed the evil city and purified it.[22]

Yama, regent of the south, peeps into the picture for the first time in the *Ṛg Veda*. He was to begin with king of the blessed dead who reigned in bliss in a place of unfading light and unfailing water. During the post-Vedic period he becomes the horrific judge of the dead.[23]

According to the *Mayamata* (36:144-49) Yama is seated on a buffalo mount. He holds the mace or *pāśa* 'noose'. He has his assistants, the "catchers" who follow him. They are Chitragupta and Kāla. Others are Mṛtyu, Saṁhita, Dharma and Adharma.

The Daśadikdevatas of the *Nṛsiṁhaprasāda*, cited in *Śrītattvanidhi* (1:4:98), include a Dakṣiṇadik goddess who is seated on the donkey vehicle. She is yellow, has the face of a donkey and is youthful. Yama coming under the Aṣṭadikpālakas of *Śrītattvanidhi* (1:4:98), based on *Śaivāgama* and *Nṛsiṁhaprasāda*,is seated on *mahiṣa vāhana*. The lord is blue in colour and bears the *kāladaṇḍa* 'staff of time'. He carries the *kālapāśa* 'noose of time' in his hand. The *Aparājitapṛccha* prescribes the same features. It adds the *lekhani* (pen), *puṣtaka* and *kukkuṭa* to the emblems.

In early Tamil literature Yama is denoted by the name Kālaṉ 'time' (*Puram*. 41, *Kali*. 5) and *Kūṟṟu* 'fate' (*Puram*. 42, *Kali* 5). He is called Namaṉ (= Yama ?) in a rare instance (*Puram*. 6). The *Cilappatikāram* uses the name Kūṟṟu in an important context. The hero of the epic, Kōvalaṉ, meets a goldsmith, a middleman, to sell his anklet. He needs the assistance because his was a valuable property, worthy of being sold at the royal household. The goldsmith being one associated with the Pāṇḍyan royal family, Kōvalaṉ seeks his help. It was this goldsmith who was responsible for the murder of Kōvalaṉ. The goldsmith is called *Kūṟṟattūtaṉ* (*tūtaṉ* = Skt. *dūta*) 'messenger of Fate' (*Cilampu*. 2:16:115). In another context, Yama is called *ceyiṟttoḻil mutiyōṉ* 'that old man in charge of death' (*Cilampu*. 3:27:7).

Yama appears quite often in the *bhakti* literature of the Nāyaṉmār. It is because he came to be associated with Śiva in one of his important forms called Kālāri or Kālasaṁhāramūrti. According to the myth, Mārkaṇḍeya, a devout worshipper of Śiva, was to die on a particular day. Yama promptly proceeded to the spot to cast his noose and take away the life of Mārkaṇḍeya. At the appointed hour, Śiva came to the rescue of his devotee, kicked Kāla and saved the victim. Yama in *Tēvāram* is called Kūṟṟu or Kālaṉ. Śiva is said to have killed Kūṟṟu (1:114:4). Kālaṉ was dead (1:28:7). Śiva killed Kāla and himself became Kāla (1:45:4). He is called Kālākāla. Śiva punished Kāla in order to protect Mārkaṇḍeya (4:65:1, 4:108:1).

Nirṛti, regent of the southwest, is mounted on a man or corpse. He has big eyes and holds a *khaḍga* in hand according to the *Mayamata* (36:149-50). He wears yellow garments and is dark and sturdy. He wears all kinds of ornaments. According to the *Aparājitapṛccha*, he also holds the *kheṭaka*, *kartari* and *arimastaka* (head of enemy). The Nirṛttidevata under Daśadiks of *Nṛsiṁhaprasāda* (*Śrītattvanidhi* 1:4:86) is to be seated on a camel *vāhana*. Nirṛtti under the *Aṣṭadikpālakas* of *Śrītattvanidhi* (1:4:99), which quotes the *Mayūraka-Danakaṇḍa*, bears the *khaḍga* and *kheṭaka*. He is blue in colour and has the *naravāhana*. His eyes are crooked and his wife is Kālikā. Early Tamil literature has no reference to this god. The *Piṅkalam* (1:19) which lists the names of eight directional deities in the meant order includes Niruti, others being Intiraṉ (Indra), Akkiṉi (Agni), Iyamaṉ (Yama), Varuṇaṉ (Varuṇa), Vāyu, Kupēraṉ (Kubera) and Īcāṉaṉ (Īśāna) who are collectively called *eṇṭicaippālar*(*aṣṭadikpālakas*).

Varuṇa, regent of the west, is a Vedic deity of lesser denomination. In iconography he holds the *pāśa*. His vehicle is the deer according to *Matsya Purāṇa* or crocodile according to the *Agni Purāṇa* or goose according to the *Bṛhatsaṁhita*. The *Mayamata* (36:151-52) provides him with the *pāśa* and *makaravāhana*. He is white in colour, strong and either seated or standing. He wears two types of ear rings, necklaces and armlets. The female edition of Varuṇa according to the *Nṛsiṁhaprasāda* (*Śrītattvanidhi* 1:4:88) is youthful and black in colour. She has two hands. The horse is her *vāhana*. It may be noted here that Varuṇānī is one among the goddesses known to the Vedic pantheon according to A.A. Macdonell. Varuṇa according to the *Mayūra Bhaṭṭabhāskarīya* (*Śrītattvanidhi* 1:4:100) holds a *nāgapāśa*. He wears red garments. His colour is golden and his *vāhana* the *makara*. He is the husband of Padminī.

Varuṇa in Tamil tradition was God of the littoral region. The ancient Tamil grammatical work, *Tolkāppiyam*, speaks of Varuṇaṉ as God of the sandy world, *Varuṇaṉ mēya perumaṇal ulakamum*. The custom in those times was to implant the tooth of a shark in the sands of the beach and worship the god. The *Paṭṭiṇappālai* (11. 86-7) talks about the methods of offering:

> *Ciṉaicuraviṉ kōṭunaṭṭu*
> *Maṉaiccērttiya vallaṇaṅkiṉaṉ*

According to the commentator, Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar (12th century A.D.) Varuṇaṉ was to emerge when such a kind of propitiation was made.[24] The *Kuṟuntokai* (no. 164) has reference to the horn of a fish and *pavvam aṇaṅku* 'Angust of the wild sea' who was Varuṇaṉ. The *Akanāṉūṟu* (no. 240) has reference to the sea god(dess ?). According to the account, the hero takes his sons to the high seas to train them in fishing. The hero's wife pays homage to the god of wild waters to protect the adventurers. The *Cilappatikāram* (1:7:v.24) makes note of a *nilatteyvam* 'god of the land' with reference to the littoral region which means God of *neytal*, i.e., Varuṇaṉ.

The above perspective from Tamil literature is very important because alike Indra another *dikpālaka*, Varuṇa, gets an indelible place in Tamil socio-cultural life. Excepting in *Tolkāppiyam*, his name is not mentioned in other texts. The worship pertaining to the tooth of a fish may have its own relevance to Varuṇa because even in case of Indra it is said that either the *vacciram* (*vajra*) or white elephant (Airāvata) was the object of adoration. It is likely that Varuṇaṉ was worshipped through a totem.

Vāyu, regent of the northwest, was among the gods of the Vedic pantheon. He was *vāta*, the wind god, whom Macdonell brings under atmospheric deities.

Vāyu, according to the *Mayamata* (36:153-54), holds a *dhvaja* 'flag' in hand. He has red eyes and is smoky in colour. His eyebrows are arched and his mount is a gazelle. He is decked with *sakalābharaṇas*. Pavana, according to the *Aparājitapṛccha*, is *mṛgārūḍha* 'seated on a gazelle'. He holds the *dhvaja*, *patāka* and *kamaṇḍalū* in hands. Vāyu as accounted under the *Pañcabhūteśvararūpas* of *Śrītattvanidhi* (1:4:81) is seated on a flying antelope. He is *dvibhuja* and holds the *dhvaja* in one. The other hand is in *varadamudrā*. He is of the colour of smoke. The feminine Vāyudikdevata of Daśadiks accounted under the *Nṛsiṁhaprasāda* is blue in colour and holds a bow. She appears with her husband. The *prāṇadikdevata* listed under the Aṣṭadikpālakas of *Śrītattvanidhi* (1:4:101), cited from *Mayūraka Bhaṭṭabhāskarīya*, holds a *svarnadaṇḍa* 'golden staff'. His vehicle is the *mṛga* and colour blue. The name of his wife is Mohinī.

Kubera, regent of the north, is supposed to be chief of the *yakṣas*. According to the *Mayamata* (36:154-56) he wears a *kirīṭamakuṭa* and all other ornaments. His mount is the ram and he holds a *khaḍga* in hand. Two of the hands are in *abhaya* and *varadamudrās*. He is attended by *Śaṅkha* and *Padma-nidhis* and accompanied by his wife. The *Akanāṉūṟu* (no. 66) refers to him as *māṉitikkiḻavaṉ* 'lord of great riches'.

Dhananda according to the *Aparājitapṛccha* is *caturbhuja* and seated on *gajavāhana*. His emblems are *gadā*, *nidhi* (treasure), *bījapuraka* (citron) and *kamaṇḍalū*. The female edition of Kubera as accounted under the Daśadikdevatas of the *Nṛsiṁhaprasāda* (*Śrītattvanidhi* 1:4:89) has a white face and red body. She is an angry person who is guardian of the *uttaradik*. Kubera according to the *Śrītattvanidhi* (1:4:102), cited from *Mayūraka Bhaṭṭabhāskarīya*, has the horse vehicle. He holds the *kuntāyudha*. He has crooked eyes and is golden in colour. His wife is Cintiriṇī.

B.C. Bhattacharya quotes the *Viṣṇudharmottara* and says that Kubera holds the club and *śakti* in hands. His consort is Vṛddhidevī who is seated on the Lord's left thigh. He has a big belly and holds a purse in the hand. His vehicle is either the ram or a man.[25]

Īśāna, regent of the northeast, rides a bull according to the *Mayamata* (36:161-62). He is *trinetra* and holds a trident. The world's benefactor, he is white in colour. The Lord holds the *nāgendra* (lion) and *bījapūraka* (citron) according to the *Aparājitapṛccha*.[26] The *Śrītattvanidhi* (1:4:103), citing the *Mayūraka-Dhanakaṇḍa*, treats Īśāna as an equivalent of Parameśvara. He is the husband of Gaurīdevī. His mount is the bull. He is *caturbhuja* and holds the *śūla* and *japamālā*. The two other hands are in *abhaya* and *varada mudrās*.

The Tamil sources do not make a note of the individual names of the eight directional deities but there are some collective terms to denote the *aṣṭadikpālakas*. The *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* (11. 160-61) refer to *nāṟperunteyvam* 'four great gods' whose function was to protect the worlds. The commentators say the four great gods are Indra, Yama, Varuṇa and Kubera, regents of the cardinal directions.[27] Clear notes on *aṣṭadikpālakas* are to be found in the *Tēvāram*. The directional deities by this time had been subordinated to Śiva and in several instances they are considered to be manifestations of the Lord, Śiva, himself. The following are few of the references:

Tikkiṉ ticai tēvar 'gods of the directions' (1:36:3)
Eṇṭicaiyōr '(gods of the) eight directions' (2:209:6)
Eṇṭicaipālar (Skt. *aṣṭadikpālakas*) 'eight directional gods' (2:219:4)
Ticaiyāṭavarkaḷ 'men of the directions' (3:334:4)

In all these cases the directional deities are supposed to attend on major forms of Śiva like Naṭarāja or Liṅgodbhavamūrti. In few other cases the directional deities are identified with Śiva himself. The following may be noted in this context:

Eṇṭicaikkiraivarāki '(He-Śiva) became God of the eight directions' (4:48:8)
Eṇṭicaikkumūrttiyāyniṉṟāṉ '(He-Śiva) stood as Mūrti of the eight directions' (6:217:7).
Ticaiyeṭṭuntāmēyāyacelvar '(He-Śiva) goes about having himself become the eight directions' (6:235:6)
Ticaikkellāmtēvākiniṉṟār '(He-Śiva) stands having become the gods of the directions' (6:250:5)
Eṇṭicaīkkuṅkaṇṇāṉāṉ '(He-Śiva) became the eye of the eight directions' (6:258:9)
Eṭṭutticaikaḷuntāmē 'He himself is the eight directions' (6:303:8).

In a rare hymn the names of the *grahas* and *dikpālakas* are noted who are supposed to be manifestations of the Lord Śiva, himself.

Ñāyirāy namaṉumāki varuṇaṉāyc cōmanākit
Tīyaru niruti vāyuntippiya cāttaṉāki (*Tēvāram* 4:66:5)

'That the Lord himself assumed the form of Sun, God of Death (Yama), Varuṇa, Soma, God of Fire (Agni), Nirṛtti, Vāyu and Sāsta'.

Planetary Deities

The *Navagrahas* 'Nine Planetary Deities' seem to have been worshipped by about the 4th century A.D. Among them Sūrya (Sun) and Candra (Moon) were very important.

The *Mayamata* (36:127-33) deals with the iconographical features of Sūrya. He is supposed to travel in a one-wheeled chariot, drawn by seven horses. Aruṇa is the charioteer. He is *dvibhuja* and holds *padmas* in both hands. He wears all kinds of ornaments and is attended by Uṣa-Pratyuṣa or Prabhā-Sandhyā. If the hands are four, the *pūrvahastas* exhibit *abhaya* and *varada mudrās* and the *parahastas* hold *padmas*. Aruṇa is *dvibhuja* and stands up in the chariot. A cavalcade of attendant gods are present who appear in fifteen rows. The text says, "He is Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and the other gods."[28]

The *Aparājitapṛccha* (24:10) takes stock of Sūrya and the other eight planets, called *Navagrahānvitam*. Sūrya is *dvibhuja* and holds *padmas* in hands. He wears red garments. Soma is white in colour and holds lotuses in hands. According to the *Matsya Purāṇa* (Chap. 261) Sūrya is mounted on a one-wheeled chariot, drawn by seven horses. Aruṇa is the driver. Daṇḍa and Piṅgala are the attendants. The *Viṣṇudharmottara* (67:2-3) prescribes the *udieyaveṣa* for the Lord. It consists of a coat, trousers and boots. He is *sindura* in colour. He is *caturbhuja* and attended by Daṇḍa and Piṅgala. A flagstaff is found to his left. His four sons are Revanta, Yama, Manu and Dvitaya, present by his side.

Sūrya and Candra are called Ñāyiṟu (and so Ñāyiṟṟukkiḻamai 'Sunday') and Tiṅkaḷ (Tiṅkaṭkkiḻamai 'Monday') in Tamil sources. The *Paripāṭal* (3:4-10) notes these two planets in its list of the minor deities, which runs as follows:

Tīvaḷi vicumpu nilaṉīraintu - the *pañcabhūtas*
Ñāyiṟu tiṅkaḷu maṟaṉumaivarum - Sun and Moon and the five more
Titiyiṉ ciṟārum vitiyiṉ makkaḷum - *asuras* and the twelve *Ādityas*
Mācileṉmarum patiṉoru kapilarum - *Vāsus* eight and eleven Rudras
Tāmāiruvarun tarumaṉu maṭaṅkalum - two Aśvinis, Yama and Kāla
Mūvērulakamum ulakinuḷ maṉpatum - 21 worlds all consumed by Viṣṇu
Māyōy ... - 'You, Māya (Viṣṇu)'.

There is a similar passage in the *Maṇimēkalai* (6:11. 178-82):

Iruvakaicuṭarum irumūvakaiyiṟ - Sūrya and Candra and the six types of gods
Peruvaṉaipeytiya teyvatakaṇaṅkaḷum- (2 x 3) six types of *gaṇas*
Palvakaiyacurarum paṭutuyarurūvum - many a type of *asuras*
Eṇvakai narakarum iruvicumpiyaṅkum - eight types of *naras* (human beings)
Paṉmīnīṭṭamum nāḷum kōḷum - stars of the Milky Way, the days and planets.

From the above account, it is clear that by about the time of *Paripāṭal* (4th century A.D.) a clear perspective of the planetary deities existed in the Tamil country in addition to the cavalcade of minor deities. The *Maṇimēkalai* in the passage cited above describes a Cosmic disc, called *Cakkaravāḷakkōṭṭam*, which encompasses the entire community of gods, goddesses and demons. The sun and moon get an important place in it.

The Sun, also called Katiravaṉ 'one of rays', is supposed to travel in a chariot (*Puram*. 4, *Cilampu*. 1:6: concluding stanza) which is one wheeled (*Akam*. 360). He is said to be the enemy of fog, *paṉippakaivāṉavaṉ* (*Mani*. 25: 180). He is decorated with never-fading flowers (*Akam*. 361).[29] There were temples for Sūrya and Candra in the ancient city of the Cōḻas, Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṇam, later submerged into the sea. The Sun Temple is called *Pakalvāyi-uccikkiḻān-kōṭṭam*(*Cilampu*. 1:9:10-11). The Moon Temple is called *Nilākkōṭṭam* (*nilā* = moon, *kōṭṭam* = temple, *Cilampu*. 1:9:13).

The Moon was known as *Nilā* and *Tiṅkaḷ*. There are references in *Puṟanāṉūṟu* (no. 60), *Akanāṉūṟu* (no. 239), *Kuṟuntokai* (nos. 178, 307) and *Maturaikkāñci* (1. 193) to point out the worship of moon. He is called *pirai* 'crescent'. To be specific, he was the waxing moon (*uyar pirai toḻuvum, Akam*. 139). Later the Crescent gets grafted into the iconography of Śiva as fitted on his matter locks. There are a number of references to the effect in the *Tēvāram* literature. The Lord in such a form came to be called Candraśekhara.

It seems there existed *tīrthas* that had medicinal values. We hear of Cōmakuṇṭam (Somakuṇḍa)[30] and Cūriyakuṇṭam (Sūryakuṇḍa) in the *Cilappatikāram* (1:9:59). The value of the Sun and Moon were increasing in the society as we come across a number of folk beliefs being in vogue. The author of the book, *Cilappatikāram* (1:1:1, 4), commences his *magnum opus* with an invocation to the Moon first and then the Sun:

Tiṅkaḷai pōṟṟutun tiṅkaḷaip pōṟṟuttum 'Let the moon be praised, moon praised'
Ñāyiṟu pōṟṟutum ñāyiṟu pōṟṟuttum 'Let the sun be praised, sun praised'

The heroine of the epic, Kaṇṇaki, learning the fate of her husband, Kōvalaṉ's untimely death due to the injustice meted out by the Pāṇḍya king, Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ, solicits the eye-witness of the Sun God and poses him the question, "O Lord of scorching rays, tell me whether my husband is guilty'. The Sun replies, "No, young girl, your husband is not guilty". To quote:

Kāykatirccelvaṉē kaḷvaṉō eṉ kaṇavaṉ
Kaḷvaṉō allaṉ karuṅkayaṟkaṇ mātarāy
Oḷḷeri uṉṉumivvūreṉṟa torukural

The sun not only bears witness to the bygone events but also foretells the future by saying that the city of Maturai would be destroyed by fire for having meted out an injustice to an innocent merchant. It was believed by the people that the proper rotation of the planets is indispensable for cosmic tranquility, lest chaos and confusion would prevail. The idea is beautifully stated in the *Maṇimēkalai* (7: 11.8-10). That is to say if the reigning scepre yields to injustice, the planets go out of order; if the planets run amac, the rains may not pour regularly; and if the rains fail, there is no life on earth. The implication is that everything rests on good administration that controls the movements of the celestial bodies like the Sun and Moon who determine the order of nature.

Clearly defined idea of Navagrahas first appears in the works of Ñāṉacampantar. In a series, called *Kōḷarupatikam* 'decad of planets', the Nāyaṉmār spells out the names and appeals to the Lord Śiva, for protection against the malivolous reactions through the planetary deities. To this day, this verse is sung by pious Śaivas for protection from evils produced by planetary actions. The names of the planets accounted under the hymn are Sun, Moon, Mars, Sukra, Neptune, Jupiter, Saturn, Pluto and Mercury. To quote:

Ñāyiṟu tiṅkaḷ cevvāy putaṉ viyāḷaṉ veḷḷi caṉi pāmpiraṇṭu mūṭaṉē ... (*Tēvāram* 2:221:1).

In another hymn five of them are mentioned in a disorderly pattern as follows: *caṉi putaṉ ñāyiṟu veḷḷi tiṅkaḷ* (3:268:7). Appar in one of the hymns (5:149:4) refers to the myth behind the waxing and wanning character of the Moon due to the evil effects of Rāhu and Ketu who are supposed to swallow him.

Demigods

The *Mayamata* deals with the features of demigods like *Aśvinidevatas* (vv. 167-70), *Vasus* (vv. 171-73), the *Maruts* (vv. 173-74), *Kṣetrapālakas* (vv. 178-85), the Ādityas (vv. 189-91) and *Dvārapālakas* (vv. 310-15).

The *Aśvinidevatas* are horsemorphosed beings, seated on *siṁhāsana*. They hold *daḍimi* flowers and wear *yajñopavītas*. They are the celestial doctors. They are attended by *cauri*-bearers.

The *Vasus* are eight in number. They are Dhara, Dhruva, Soma, Apa, Anala, Anila, Pratyuṣa and Prabhava. They hold the *khaḍga* and *kheṭaka*. They are *dvibhuja* and wear all kinds of ornaments.

The *Maruts* are posted at sacrificial quarters. They are eight in number, wear flowers and white garments. They have knotted locks of hair.

The *Kṣetrapālakas* are of three types, depending upon their *guṇāṁśa* aspect. They are either *sattvika* or *rājasa* or *tāmasa*. The *sattvika* images are either *dvi* or *caturbhuja*. If *dvibhuja* they hold the *kapāla* and *triśūla*. The four armed type has the other two hands in *abhaya* and *varada mudrās*. The *rājasa* images are six armed. The hands hold the *triśūla, khaḍga, ghaṇṭa, kheṭaka, kapāla* and *nāgapāśa*. The *aṣṭabhuja* images are of *tāmasa* type. They carry bāṇa and *dhanus* in addition to the six noted under the *rājasa* type. The *kṣetrapālakas* are attended by dogs, cocks, *yoginīs* and *siddhas*.

The Ādityas are twelve in number. They are Aryaman, Mitra, Varuṇa, Bhaga, Indra, Vivasvant, Pusana, Parjanja, Tvastṛ, Viṣṇu, Ajaghanya and Jaghanuaja.[31] Also called Bhāskara, they are uniformly *dvibhuja* and hold *padmas* in their hands. They appear on *padmapīṭhas*.

The *dvārapālakas* are gatekeepers. The *dvāras* found on cardinal directions are guarded by specific keepers. They are Nandi and Kāla for the east, Daṇḍi and Muṇḍi for the south, Vaijaya and Bhṛṅgiriti for the west and Gopa and Anantaka for the north. They are characterised by specific emblems as follows: Nandi - *gadā* and dark (in colour), Kāla - *ṭaṅka* and red, Daṇḍi - *Khaḍga* and blue, Muṇḍi - mace and red, Vaijaya - arrow and white, Bhṛṅgiriti - *triśūla* and blue-green, Gopa - *vajra* and lotus dark, and Anantaka - *śūla* and black. They are usually *caturbhuja, trinetra* and have fangs. They wear snakes as their ornaments and evoke terror by their gesture. A trident appears above their headgear.

In early Tamil literature down to the 7th century A.D. a number of demigods are noted. Mostly they appear as associated with gods of higher denomination like Śiva and Viṣṇu. The *Tēvāram* for example, presents a panoramic account of adorers and attendants on Śiva. They are Brahmā (1:2:8, 1:4:7), Viṣṇu (6:227:10), Gaṇapati (6:227-10), Kumāra (6:227:10), Indra (4:33:1), Āditya-Soma-Budha (4:36:7), Maraiyōr or Vētiyar (i.e., Vedis) (1:4:1-2, 1:33:4), Muṉivar (1:12:6), Candra-Sūrya (5:166:4), Antaṇar (*brāhmaṇas* who teach *Vedas* and *aṅgas*) (1:6:1), Imaiyōr (those who do not wink, *devas*) (1:14:5), Viccātarar (*vidyādharas*) (2:145:5), Kiṉṉarar-Tarumaṉ (Dharma), Varuṇaṉ (2:215:4), Irāmaṉ (Rāma) (5:158:5), Puttar (Buddha) (5:201:9), Iyakkar (*yakṣa*), (5:146:8), cittar (*siddha*) (5:165:5), *bhūtas* (6:251:1), *patineṇkaṇam* (18 *gaṇas*) (6:291:2), *nāga* (1:85:3), Gaṅgā (1:39:1, 1:73:1, 1:77:6), *pēy* (ghouls) (1:77:3, 3:306:3, 7:46:4), Kāḷi-Kūḷi (3:377:1), *kiṉṉarar (kinnaras)* (7:55:6) and so on.

The *Nāga* and *Garuḍa* figure prominently in Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* literature of the Āḻvārs. Viṣṇu in his Raṅganātha aspect is said to recline on a couch provided by the eternal snake, Ādiśeṣa or Ananta. He is called Aravaṇaiyāṉ or Pāmpaṇaiyāṉ (*Tiruvantāti* 2:12, *Periya Tiruvantāti* v. 86).[32] It is called *pāmpumettai* 'bed of snake' (*Periya Tirumoḻi* 5:1:7). The *Nāgas* as a people appear in the *Maṇimēkalai* (Canto 16). They are considered to be of low birth (*Mani.* 16:117). The *Nāga* has burning eyes, *eriviḻinākaṉ* (*Mani.* 16:106).

The antidote for *Nāga* is *Garuḍa*. He appears in Vaiṣṇava literature in Viṣṇu's Garuḍa-Nārāyaṇa form. The *Paripāṭal* (4:43-8) has a beautiful description linking the *nāga* and *garuḍa*. The *nāga* forms *garuḍa's* ornaments like *udarabandha, kaṅkaṇa, keyūra, makuṭa* and so on. The snake, above all, is the kite's food.

The bull, Nandi, being associated with Śiva, is the focus of attention in the literature of the Nāyaṉmār. He is called *viṭai* (1:11:1, 1:13:10, 1:15:6), *iṭapam* (Skt. *ṛṣabha*) (1:12:10, 3:334:4), *ēṟu* (1:24:4, 10) or *aṭalēṟu* (2:156:2), *nanti* (1:76:11, 3:307:11, 4:56:8, 6:242:2), *erutu* (1:66:5) and Māl-*viṭai* (1:12:7, 1:56:7, 3:292:4). The names *viṭai* 'stiff' or 'erect' and *ēṟu* 'prance' or 'rearing (attitude)' seem to point out the virile character of the beast[33]. This is pointed out in a hymn where the bull is called a prancing white animal, *pāyum veḷḷai ēṟu* (1:51:3). Another rare hymn speaks of several names of Nandi called Kaṉakananti, Puṭpananti, Pavaṉananti, Kumanamacunananti, Kukainanti, Tivaṉananti and Aṉakanantiyār (3:299:6). *Kaṉaka* means gold, *puṭpa* (Skt. *puṣpa*) 'flower' and *pavaṉa* 'wind'.

Among the other minor deities, appearing in early Tamil literature, are the *dikgajas*. There are few rare indications to this element in the Twin Epics. The *Cilappatikāram* (3:25:155) handles the phrase, *ticaimukavēḻam* (*ticai* = *dik, mukam* = *mukha, vēḻam* 'elephant'). The *Maṇimēkalai* (4:44) makes note of one *Kālavēkam* 'elephant of time' which is supposed to be sexually virile.

The oft noted *aṇaṅkus* seem to be spirits, causing good or harm to human beings. The *Maṇimēkalai* (3:57) refers to *tākku aṇaṅku*, spirits who attack innocent men and cause them harm. They are obviously evil spirits and supposed to reside in gardens. The heroine of the epic, Maṇimēkalai, who goes about during an evening all alone is advised to be very careful about such malivolous spirits. Similarly, Kōvalaṉ, the hero of *Cilappatikāram*

(2:1:171-200), comes across a *kāṉ urai teyvam* 'deity residing in forest' who approaches him with an evil motive whom the hero chases away by uttering the *pāy kalaip pāvai mantiram*, a *mantrasloka* in praise of Koṟṟavai (Pāykalaipāvai) whose vehicle is the *kalai* (gazelle). She is likely to be a forest nymph whom the editors of the text consider *yakṣī*.

Divine messengers of the heaven, floating about the skies, are often noted. The *vidyādharas* are called *viccātarar*. The *Maṇimēkalai* (3:26-35) treats them in the sense of evil spirits since the heroine, Maṇimēkalai, is advised by her aide, Cutamati, to be cautious about such cunning deities who kidnap young women. The *Maṇimēkalai*(10:24) mentions *Cāraṉar* who roam about the sky. The *Maturaikkāñci* (11.581-2) refers to the feminine beings who float in the sky. Called *vāṉava makaḷir* 'sky girls', they are the feminine equivalents of *vidyādharas* and *cāraṉars*.

There were also deities inhabiting posts and pillars. The *Maṇimēkalai* (7:94-105) talks of Kantirpavay (*kantu* = post, *pāvay* = girl) who is able to foretell the future and recall the past. There were sea goddesses since Maṇimēkalai is the name of the *kuladevata* of Kōvalaṉ, father of Maṇimēkalai, according to whose advice she was named in honour of his family goddess. There were island goddesses as Tīvatilakai (*tīvu* 'island') as an important character in *Maṇimēkalai* (*Patikam* 51-8) who meets the heroine in a solitary island and assists Maṇimēkalai, to know about her previous birth and recover from a brook a bowl which produced never-failing food-stuff.[34]

CONSOLIDATION

Rooted in later Vedic culture, the myths and iconographical aspects of Brahmā reach a stage of maturity by about the 5th century A.D. No definitive cult seems to have developed after his personality in spite of the Brahmavāda that the *Maṇimēkalai* speaks about. It is likely to have been more a philosophical system rather than a cult because Brahmā had no place within the fold of five or six religions that literary works mention.

Brahmā as a member of the Trinity was in charge of Creation. Thus, theoretically his place is on par with Śiva and Viṣṇu. May be the increasing popularity of the other two deities was responsible for his fall. He came to be viewed by the Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas as a subordinate deity. According to the Vaiṣṇavas, Brahmā was ordained by Viṣṇu to be in charge of *sṛṣṭi* in cosmic order. Brahmā in turn created Śiva to take charge of destruction. The *bhakti* literature of the Āḻvār says, "Nāṉmukaṉ (Caturmukha) was created by Nārāyaṇa, Nāṉmukaṉ created Śaṅkara in his own image". But the Śaivas claim superiority for Śiva over Brahmā and Viṣṇu. In their opinion Viṣṇu is third in the order of Trinity.

The myths of Brahmā are retold in a number of *purāṇas* like *Brahma-*, *Brahmavaivarta-*, *Padma*, *Kūrma-*, *Matsya-* and so on. Being a creator he not only produces the race of *ṛṣis*, *asuras* and *devas* but his own consort, Sarasvatī, and takes her hand. The *Vedas* and other scriptures take their origin through the mouth of Brahmā. Thus, he is considered the Prajāpati and Pitāmaha.

The minor deities of the Hindu pantheon have their roots both in the Vedic and folk traditions. Veronica Ions is of opinion that several of the Vedic deities lost their original form and shape by about the 7th century A.D. and mingle with the local deities in such a way that it is difficult to draw a demarcation betwen the Āryan and pre-Āryan or Dravidian elements. Both by a process of syncretistic reformation take a new shape. Ultimately, according to Ions, the Dravidian elements prevail over Āryan.

Indra, Agni, Vāyu, Varuṇa and Soma were deep-rooted in Vedic tradition but later become subordinate deities and come under the deities in charge of directions. But it is interesting to find that Varuṇa and Indra are said to be the two deities in charge of two among the five landed divisions of the Tamil country. The ancient literature in Tamil (e.g., *Cilappatikāram* and *Maṇimēkalai*) speak about the temples dedicated to them but by about the 5-6th century A.D. no trace of a temple for Indra or Varuṇa exists. As a result of the *bhakti* cult the place of Indra has been taken by Kṛṣṇa in the North and Murukaṉ in the south. The Śaivas came to treat all the eight among the *dikpālakas* as manifestations of Śiva. Appar beautifully says that the Lord Śiva became the eyes of the eight directions.

Among the planetary deities the most popular are Sūrya and Candra. Textual sources talk about the others but the Sun and Moon mostly appear in plastic illustrations of the age. Among others are *vidyādharas, apsarase, ṛṣis, yakṣas, dvārapālakas, kṣetrapālakas,* Rudras and so on.

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8. P.V. Somasundaranar, *Paripāṭal* (text and commt), p. 306.
9. P.V. Somasundaranar, *Maṇimēkalai* (text and commt.), Madras, 1975, pp. 149-50. The text talks of a Cosmic Cycle of gods and goddesses who constitute the Cakkaravāḷakkōṭṭam, a *maṇḍala*.
10. See *Tēvāram* IV (30:5, 33:6) and VI (282:5).
11. For a detailed account of *Nālāyirativviyappirapantam*, the Vaiṣṇava Tamil *bhakti* literature, See Vol. I, Chap. I.

12. A.A. Macdonell, *The Vṛdaddevati*, Vol. VI, p. 17.
13. Veronica Ions, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
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16. *Idem.*
17. *Idem.* Jeyapriya Rajarajan, A Note on Vaccirakkōṭṭam, *East and West*, 2004, 54 : 1-4, p. 291.
18. A.A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 55.
19. V. Kanakasabhai, *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*, pp. 143, 162-63.
20. N. Subrahmanyan, *Śaṅgam Polity*, p. 367.
21. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Śaṅgam Age: Its Cults and Cultures*, p. 69.
22. The incident strikingly compares with Laṅkādahana by Hanumant before Śrī Rāma could find entry into the city. Sītā's *agnipraveṣa* may also be compared with the incident which points out the purifying nature of *agni*. *Agni* is not merely the symbol of destruction but also of purification.
23. L.D. Barnett, "Yama, Gandharva and Glaucus", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, London Institute, Vol. III, 1926-28.
24. U.V. Saminathaier, *Pattuppāṭṭu* (text and commt.), p. 519 fn.
25. B.C. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
26. Dubey (1987:341) equals *nāgendra* with "lion". *Naga* is "snake" and *nagendra* "king of snakes".
27. U.V. Saminathaier , *op. cit.*, p. 57 fn.
28. Burno Dagens, *op. cit.*, p. 355.
29. C.E. Ramachandran, *Ahanānūṟu in its Historical Setting*, p. 91.
30. Soma in later tradition is identified with Candra but during the Vedic period he stood for the spurious drink, used by Āryans during ritual orgies. According to Macdonell, he was the god of sacrifice, a plant and the personified liquor.
31. Aryaman, Mitra, Puṣan, Vivasvat and Tvastṛ are Vedic deities. See A.A. Macdonell, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-130.
32. For a detailed account see Vol. I, Chap. I.
33. For a detailed study see R.K.K. Rajarajan, 1996.
34. Maṇimēkalai, daughter of Kōvalaṉ and Mātavi, embraces the order of the Buddha and dedicates herself to serve the cause of the suffering multitude. She obtains a miraculous bowl which produced food perpetually to serve humanity.

CHAPTER II

Iconographical Survey: Upper Deccan

Brahmā and the Minor Deities occupy a secondary or tertiary place within the setting of a temple meant for Śiva, Viṣṇu and the Śhakti goddess during the period under study. No temple exclusively dedicated to them is to be found. Brahmā mostly occupies a *koṣṭha* in a quarter of the temple. Occasionally, he forms part of the Trimūrtis and gets a place accorded on par with Śiva and Viṣṇu. In Tamil Nadu, he gets prominently projected in the Tiruccirāppaḷḷi lower cave. Hẹ appears as part and parcel of severa l of Śiva's iconographical forms. Good examples are Liṅgodbhavamūrti, Kalyāṇasundara, Tripurasaṁhāra, Brahmaśirascchedaka and Somāskanda. Minor deities appearing in temples of the age are *Dikpālakas, Navagrahas, Kṣetrapālakas, Dvārapālakas, Dvārapālīkas* and so on.

ELEPHANTA

There is no independent representation of Brahmā or the Minor deities in any of the big or small caves in Elephanta. The main cave in most of its illustrations pertaining to the various manifestations of Śiva includes both Brahmā and the minor gods like *dikpālakas* in addition to Viṣṇu. The image of Skanda in the right small cave, adjoining the main cave, includes Brahmā in addition to the *vidyādharas* and the *apsarase*. Iconographical forms of Śiva, which include Brahmā and the minor gods are Yogīśvara, Naṭarāja, 'Dice Game', Ardhanārīśvara, Gaṅgādhara, Kalyāṇasundara and so on. The images of Yogīśvara, Gajasaṁhāramūrti, Gaṅgādhara and Ardhanārīśvara found in the subsidiary cave to the left side of the main cave include Brahmā and the minor deities (Pl. XIII).

Brahmā in most of these panels is found seated on a *padmapīṭha* or *hamsapīṭha*[1] in *ardhapadmāsana* attitude. He is *caturbhuja* and holds the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū* in *parahastas.* He is polycephalous and represented with three faces, one frontal and the two side ones profile. In the Kalyāṇasundaramūrti panel, Brahmā is seated near the foot of Śiva to the left. He is supposed to be engaged in *agnicārya.*

The minor deities illustrated in the Elephanta cave temples include Indra, Varuṇa, Gaṅgā, Bhṛṅgi, Bhagīratha, *vidyādharas, apsarase,* attendants on Śiva and Devī, adorers and dwarf *gaṇas.* Indra appears in two important occasions in the 'Dice Game' and Ardhanārīśvara reliefs. In both cases the motif appears on the right side. In the same panels, Varuṇa appears on the left side. Both are seated on their respective vehicles, viz., elephant and *makara* respectively. Both are *dvibhuja* and are to be identified with due reference to their *vāhanas*.

Gaṅgā appears in the Gaṅgādhara panel, just above the head of Śiva. She is in *tripathāka* attitude, the heads being three, representing Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī. The polycephalous bust alone is shown while the flow of the river is marked by the streams on either side. The central face is provided with a *karaṇḍamakuṭa*. The other two faces are profiles and the goddess wears an *ekāvali* necklace.

Bhṛṅgi is emaciated. The *vidyādharas* and *apsarase* appear in almost all major carvings, except Trimūrti, and are usually in flying attitude. The adorers appear above the panels, holding oblations or the hands held in *añjalibandha*.

Nāgas and *nāginīs* are anthropomorphic basically but for the *nāga* hood, fitted on their heads. These figures appear at the base of Yogīśvara's *padmapīṭha* upon which the Lord is seated. They hold the stalk of the lotus as in Buddhist carvings representing *dhyāni*-Buddha.

Most outstanding among the contributions to the rhythm of Indian art is the figure of Trimūrti which appears redundantly in the smaller caves of Ellora. The niche, housing the image, occupies the pivotal place in the Elephanta main cave. Of the triple faces, excepting the frontal central one, the other two giving shape to Śiva-Rudra (right) and Brahmā (left) are profile. The face of Brahmā (Pl. XII) is a classical impression. The eye closed in meditation, the facial expression is one of the most sublime with the sharp cut nose appearing prominently and the lower lip full of animation adds to the charm. The elaborately decorated headgear with curls arranged on the forehead upto the ear presents the gesture of a woman, which guides scholars to identify him with Vāmadeva. The hand holds a blossomed flower, may be a lotus.

The importance attached to Trimūrti is pointed out very subtly by the *dvārapālakas*, attending on the Lord. Both are gigantic personalities, standing in *tribhaṅga* attitude. Both are attended by dwarfs whose height is the equal of a normal human being. The main *dvārapālakas* appear as in the Buddhist caves, *dvibhuja*, having the left hand rested on the *puñjam* of the cloth tied to the thigh. They are decorated with all kinds of ornaments, including an ornate headgear.

Most significant among the *dvārapālakas* of the Elephanta caves are those who appear on either side of the *dvāras* 'entrances' to the *sarvatobhadra* Liṅga shrine. The *dvāras* being four in number, totally there are eight *dvārapālakas*. All are robust and gigantic. They are standing in *dvi*- or *tri-bhaṅga* attitude. All are uniformly decorated with the *sakalābharaṇas*, including ornate headgears, *uttiriyas* and necklaces. They are *dvibhuja* and have the left arm rested on the *puñjam* of the garment tied to the thigh. It is an idiom found mostly in the Upper Deccan and may be due to Buddhist inspiration. Another significant point is that only in the Upper Deccan, especially Elephanta, Jogeśvarī and Ellora, that such cyclopean *dvārapālakas* appear. This again may also be due to Buddhist inspiration.

JOGEŚVARĪ AND MAṆḌAPEŚVARA

Neither in Jogeśvarī nor Maṇḍapeśvara there is any independent representation of Brahmā or the Minor deities like *dikpālakas*. As in Elephanta, they form part of several of the main themes relating to Śiva or Devī.

The Jogeśvarī cave in its illustration of Kailāsanātha includes Nandi in theriomorphic form who is *dvibhuja*, holding the *daṇḍa*, and is bull-faced. Other minor deities present are *vidyādharas, apsarase*, both in flying mode, and dwarf *gaṇas*.

The Mahiṣāsuramardinī relief, subjoined by one of Vīrabhadra, is appended with a figure of Dakṣa whose pride the Lord Śiva is said to have curbed through a manifestation of Vīrabhadra. Dakṣa in the carving has the face of a goat and holds the *cāmara* in hands. Among the various centres of early medieval art, Jogeśvarī is one of the few, next to Alampūr, which enlists Dakṣa in its catalogue of minor gods. Semi-divine beings holding garlands, called *yakṣas* by K.V. Soundararajan, are found present in the relief under study.

The Kalyāṇasundaramūrti panel includes Brahmā, doing *agnicārya*, as warranted by the thematic treatment of the subject. He is seated, *dvibhuja* with one of the hands holding a spoon and pouring ghee (clarified butter or *havis*) into the *homakuṇḍa*. The other hand, according to K.V. Soundararajan, is in the action of counting the *ṛks* (Vedic hymns) being chanted on the occasion. Others present in the panel are possibly Himavan, the father of Umā, and Mena, the mother. Himavan is engaged in performing *kaṉṉikādāna* or *pānigrahana*.

The 'Dice Game' panel in the Jogeśvarī cave includes minor deities like Nandi, *dvārapālakas* and dwarf *gaṇas*. What is unique in the carving relating to Śiva is the presence of a *nāga*, just behind the Lord's head. The *nāga* motif appears above the head in case of Vaikuṇṭhamūrti-Viṣṇu in Indian art through the ages. Śiva appropriating the idiom in the early cave is one of the rare factors which adds a new dimension to the subject. Perhaps, it was due to Buddhist inspiration as in case of Yogīśvara with whom *nāgas* and *nāginīs* are associated as holder of the stalk of lotus upon which the Lord is seated.

Another important factor to be noted is the presence of *mithuna* motifs in the Jogeśvarī cave, which appear here and there, especially in the Maheśamūrti relief at the western entrance to the cave. Also present are semi-divine figures and Gaṇapati. The *maithuna* motifs appear profusely in the structural temples of Alampūr and the caves at Badāmī and Ellora. Chronologically speaking, Jogeśvarī is the first to have introduced the idiom, thus giving a hint to the sources of the Tantric factor in early medieval Hindu art.

An important point to be noted with references to the *sarvatobhadra* shrine of the Jogeśvarī cave *vis-à-vis* Elephanta and Ellora (Cave XXIX) is that the eight *dvārapālakas* are missing. The *dvārapālakas* do occur at other entrances to the cave but not the Liṅga shrine. It contrasts sharply with the other two *sarvatobhadra* shrines at Elephanta and Ellora. It may point out the archaic nature of the cave and the idea that such Liṅga shrines in early stages of their evolution had no *dvārapālakas*. That is to say what is found in the Elephanta main cave and the *Ḍumārleṇa* of Ellora are later developments and these two in the respect conform to a common architectural alignment and iconographic programme. The *dvārapālakas* appearing at other locations of Jogeśvarī cave are akin to the Elephanta and Ellora types but are not gigantic. They are standing in *dvi-* or *tri - bhaṅga, dvibhuja* and have the left hand rested on the *puñjam* of the garment tied to the thigh or hip. In other words, the left hand is supposed to be in *ūruhasta* attitude.

The Maṇḍapeśvara cave is unique in certain respects. The Lakulīśa panel includes a number of minor deities of whom the *dikpālakas* deserve special mention. In addition to Indra, Yama peeps into the picture for the first time within the range of the caves in Greater Bombay. The illustration is damaged and the corresponding two other *dikpālakas* on the other side of Lakulīśa are not visible. Perhaps, one was Varuṇa as already found in Elephanta. The Lakulīśa image includes Brahmā and Viṣṇu. Brahmā is tri-cephalous and seated on a *padmapīṭha*. Others present are *vidyādharas, apsarase, cauri*-bearers and dwarf *gaṇas*. The *tāṇḍava*-Śiva panel includes Brahmā and Viṣṇu. Brahmā is seated in cross-legged attitude and *dvibhuja*. He holds the *sruk* and *akṣamālā* in hands. Among others, the presence of Bhṛṅgi is conspicuous. He is emaciated.

An important aspect of the cave temples in Greater Bombay is that neither Brahmā nor the minor deities occupy a place of prominence as they appear in the Ellora (in case of Brahmā) and Alampūr (in case of the *dikpālakas*). In the respect the coastal regions maintain a kind of rapport with regard to the status pertaining to Brahmā and the minor deities within the organisation of temple architecture *vis-à-vis* iconographic alignment.

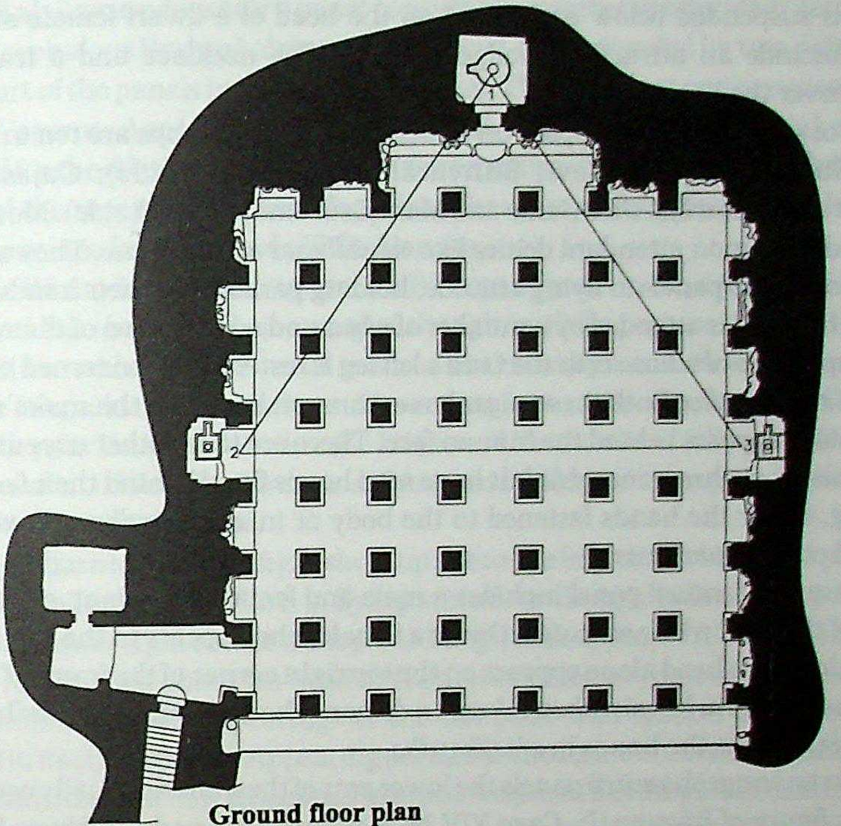
ELLORA

Excepting Caves XVI, XVII and XXI, Brahmā fails to receive an important treatment in Ellora. As in Elephanta, he and the *dikpālakas* form part of Śaiva themes such as Naṭarāja, Rāvaṇānugraha, Gajasaṁhāra and so on. In the Kailāsa, the *dikpālakas* appear in a row at the *façade* level, which is a unique representation within the phase of the art under study.

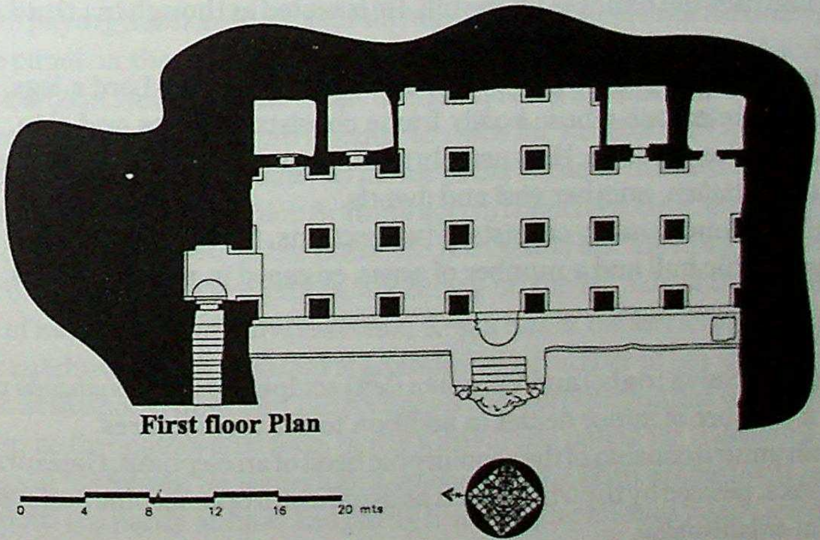
Cave XIV (Rāvaṇa-ka-khai)

The cella of the cave on both sides of its doorway houses images of *dvārapālakas* and Gaṅgā-Yamunā. The *dvārapālakas* are colossal (about 9' in height) and standing in *samabhaṅga* stance. They are *dvibhuja* and hold a flower in the hand, which appears close to the doorstep. The other hand is rested on the *puñjam* of the garment, which is tied ornamentally at the thigh level. Both wear elaborate ornaments, a decorated headgear, necklaces, *udarabandha* and *kuṇḍalas*. Both are attended by dwarfs. Above are found *vidyādharas* and *apsarase*.

Gaṅgā and Yamunā appear at the either extremity of the doorway. Both are standing and *ekabhaṅga*. They are *dvibhuja* and have one of the hands lifted above gracefully. The



Ground floor plan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First floor Plan

1. Plan, Cave XIV, Ellora

other hand is suspended below and rested on the head of a dwarf female attendant. Ornaments include an attractive headgear, *kaṭibandha*, necklace and a transparent garment to cover the lions.

The row of sculptures that appear on either side of the *maṇḍapa* are ten in number, including Siṁhavāhinī, Śrīdevī, Bhūvarāhamūrti (right side); Gajasaṁhāra, Rāvaṇānugraha, Naṭarāja, Dice Game and Mahiṣāsuramardinī (left side). Most of these panels include common attendant deities like *vidyādharas* and *apsarase*. They appear on the top section of the panels in flying attitude, holding garlands in their hands.

Bhūvarāhamūrti is attended by a number of *nāgas* and *nāginīs*. Two of them lie at the Lord's foot upon one of whose coils the Lord's left leg is rested. The concerned *nāga* holds his hands in *añjalibandha*. Both these *nāgas* have a human body and the snake's tail. The hood of the *nāga* appears behind the human face. There are three other *nāga* attendants who are basically anthropomorphic but have *nāga* hoods fitted behind their faces. They are standing, either the hands fastened to the body or in *añjalibandha*. All wear short *makuṭas* and other ornaments.

The Gajasaṁhāramūrti panel includes a male and female attendant, appearing on either side of the Lord who are seated. One is a female who appears to the left. Gajāsura is zoomorphic whose head alone appears on the top right corner of the frame. The *triśūla* which the Lord bears in his *pūrvahastas* bears a demon who is presumably Andhakāsura. He is *dvibhuja* and has the hands in *añjalibandha*.

In the Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti panels the lower part of the frame is usually occupied by the gigantic figure of Rāvaṇa. In Cave XIV he is *pañcamukha* and *daśabhuja*. He wears *kirīṭamakuṭas* and uses the hands to lift the hill. He is seated as though in *utkuṭikāsana* and faces the hill.

Naṭarāja is attended by Bhṛṅgi who appears in between the Lord's legs, enacting *caturam*. The emaciated one whose bodily frame consists of bones and skin, peeps his *kāpāla*-like head on the right side. He is usually three legged. Others attending on the Lord are one playing *mattaḷam*, another *vīṇā* and dwarfs.

The Dice Game panel usually consists of two sections, the lower part being occupied by a huge zoomorphic bull and a number of *gaṇas*, engaged in naughty plays.

Cave XV (Daśāvatāra)

The two rows of Śaiva (right) and Vaiṣṇava (left) sculptures in the *maṇḍapa* part of the cave include a number of minor deities in addition to the main figures.

Gajasaṁhāramūrti consists of the zoomorphic head of an elephant, Gajāsura, and the demon, Andhaka, pierced by the *triśula*. He is as usual anthropomorphic and *dvibhuja*, the hands being in *añjalibandha*.

Naṭarāja inlcudes the usual musical troupe; one playing cymbals, another *vīṇā* and yet another the *mattaḷam*.

The Kalyāṇasundaramūrti panel consists of a number of attendant deities, including the polycephalous Brahmā, doing the *agnicārya*. He is attended by two *dvārapālakas*. The upper part of the panels includes the *dikpālakas*. Those present on the occasion are Indra, Yama, Varuṇa, Agni, Kubera, Vāyu, Nirṛtti and Candra. No special attributes are provided for the *dikpālakas*, excepting their respective *vāhanas* upon which they appear in panels of the type in Ellora and Elephanta; for example, elephant for Indra, buffalo for Yama, antelope for Vāyu and *yāḷi* for Varuṇa.

In the Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti panels Rāvaṇa appears in the usual fashion who is five headed and ten handed. He is seated as though in *ālīḍha* posture.

The Kālasaṁhāramūrti panel is one of the most dynamic in which Śiva, emerging from the Liṅga, kicks Yama who made an attempt to take away the life of Mārkaṇḍeya. Mārkaṇḍeya is found in between the Liṅga and Yama who is falling. The boy is shaven headed and sits dolefully. Yama is *dvibhuja* and falling as though in *ālīḍha* posture. He holds the *pāśa* in right hand.

Gaṅgādhara includes Gaṅgā who is up above the left corner. She is not polycephalous as in the Elephanta cave. She is in flying attitude as though to descend upon the head of Śiva. At the lower right corner of the panel Bhagīratha appears in dimunitive form. He has the two hands lifted above his head as though engaged in yogic austerities.

Liṅgodbhavamūrti appearing on the left back wall section of the cave includes Brahmā in its right section. Appearing parallel to the figure of Candraśekhara is an image of *sthānaka* Brahmā who is *samapāda*. He is *caturbhuja* and has the *pūrvahastas* in *añjalibandha* attitude. The *parahastas* hold the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū*. Brahmā is presumably in the attitude of paying homage to Liṅgodbhavamūrti who has proved his Omnipotent quality. Atop the panel on the right side is the miniature of an anthropomorphic Brahmā who is in flying attitude. He is also *caturbhuja*, the hands being in same attitude as the other image of the Lord. He is engaged in an attempt to trace the head of the Liṅga.[2]

Tripurāntakamūrti is another dynamic panel found in the *Daśāvatāra* cave. The Lord is mounted on a chariot of which Brahmā acts as the driver. He is seated on the edge of the chariot, holding the noose of the horse. He is *trimukha* but the image is partly mutilated.

The row of Vaiṣṇava sculptures, appearing on the left side of the *maṇḍapa*, include a number of minor deities. Kāliyamardana-Kṛṣṇa has at his feet a *nāga*, Kāliya, whom the Lord has subdued. Viṣṇu-Śeṣaśāyī is attended by a number of *ṛṣis* who appear below the *nāga*-bed. Śeṣa upon whom the Lord reclines is zoomorphic and has several hoods. Garuḍa appears in anthropomorphic form in the Karivarada panel. He is *dvibhuja* and holds the Lord's legs in his hands. He wears a *kirīṭamakuṭa*. In the Bhūvarāhamūrti panel two *nāgas* appear. Both are partly animal and partly human. The human heads are overshadowed by *nāga* hoods. The Lord has his lifted leg placed on the coils of the snake. The Trivikrama panel includes Mahābali and Sukrācārya.[3]

Cave XVI (Kailāsa) (Pl. III.1)

In the entire range of early medieval art, the Kailāsa is an important zone for a study of the iconography of Brahmā and the minor deities.

The row of sculptures, appearing at the *façade* level, are significant. The illustrations from the right extremity start with a dynamic carving of Ūrdhvatāṇḍavamūrti-Śiva. The panel is subjoined by Brahmā (Pl. XV.1) as though attending on Tāṇḍava-Śiva. It is an independent image and represents Brahmā in *samapāda-sthānaka* attitude. He is *trimukha* and *caturbhuja*. The *parahastas* hold the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū*.

Totally there are twenty-eight niches at the *façade* of Kailāsa.[4] Brahmā appears in the third niche. The fourth niche consists of a representation of Liṅgodbhavamūrti which is at present much ruined. Iconographically, it is one of the most important images. It includes Brahmā, standing on the right side, doing *añjali* to the *Sthāṇu*. His features are much effaced but appears to be one of the usual type, *caturbhuja* and *sthānaka*.

Niches 8 to 11 illustrates the *dikpālakas* (Pl. XXIX). M.B. Heston has identified the first, appearing on *mayūravāhana* (?),[5] with Skanda but questions why he should form part of the *dikpālakas*. The divinity is two handed and holds a *gadā*-like object and a vessel in the right and left hands respectively. He wears a necklace, *yajñopavīta*, *udarabandha* and *keyūras*. The deity is fitted with a headgear, fashioned in the shape of a hooded snake. Excepting the vehicle which appears peacock-like, none of the other emblems subscribe to the features of Skanda as we may compare the figure with the images in Caves XIV, XXI and XXVII (?). So, he could be a *dikpālaka*. The next is Agni who is seated on goat vehicle. He is *dvibhuja* and holds no emblems. The third figure is Vāyu who is seated on an antelope. He is *dvibhuja* and holds the right hand in *kaṭakamudrā* attitude. The fourth is Varuṇa, seated on *makara*.[6] He holds a *padma* in the right hand and has the left lifted in *vismaya* attitude. The wall on the other (left) side of the *dvāra* is meant to illustrate the other four *dikpālakas* but only two, Indra with *vajra* and Yama's buffalo vehicle, alone are to be found. Two of the niches are completely ruined and thus out of the eight only five are traceable. They are Agni (regent of southeast), Vāyu (northeast), Varuṇa (west), Indra (east) and Yama (south). The missing members are Nirṛtti (southwest), Īśāna (northeast) and Kubera (north). Speaking with reference to the iconographical features of the deity housed in the first niche and the order in which the *dikpālakas* are arranged it is difficult to fix the missing three within the framework of the programme. The order as it appears is as follows:

niche no.	8 -	9 -	10 -	11 -	16 -	17 -	18 -	19
directions	?	SE	NW	W	E	S	?	?
should be ?	NW	NE	N	W	E	S	SE	SW

If the E (east) and S (south) alignment in the left side niches are meant to be so, then the parallel right niche no.11 is right but why in place of N (north) NW (northwest) in niche no.10 appears is enigmatic. Again SE (southeast) appears in niche no. 9. If the deity in niche no. 8 could safely be identified with Skanda, then it is possible that the deities originally stationed in niches 18 and 19 need not necessarily be *dikpālakas*. It is a gesture because in several of the *dikpālaka* motifs appearing as integral members of Naṭarāja (Caves XV and XXI), Mahiṣāsuramardiṇī (Cave XVI) and the Elephanta cave all the eight do not appear uniformly. It is in the temples of Alampūr for the first time in South Indian iconographic tradition that the *dikpālakas* occupy the quarters, reserved for them. The model later showed the way to the artists of the Naṭarāja temple at Citamparam as noted in M.B. Heston's article.

The main *dvāra* of the Kailāsa, which falls below the *gopura* on the back walls, facing frontally, consists of two ornate niches in which images of *Śaṅkhanidhi* (right) and *Padmanidhi* (left) appear. Both are *dvibhuja* and seated on *siṁhāsanas* in *lalitāsana* attitude. Both are elaborately decorated with ornaments; *karaṇḍamakuṭas, mālās, uttarīyas* and *udarabandhas*. *Śaṅkhanidhi* holds a *śaṅkha* and *Padmanidhi* a fully blossomed lotus in their right hands. Behind both figures a thick garland-like motif appears, which is likely to be the impression of rainbows.

The image of Mahiṣāsuramardinī, appearing behind the *gopura* section on the right side, includes among other attendants the *dikpālakas, vidyādharas* and *apsarase*. The *dikpālakas* are six in number, seated on their respective vehicles, viz., Indra (elephant), Yama (buffalo), Agni (ram), Nirṛtti (*nara*), Varuṇa (*makara*) and Vāyu (antelope). The corresponding niche on the left side of the *gopura* consists of Tripurāntaka whose chariot is driven by *trimukha*-Brahmā.

The River Goddess chapel, appearing on the northwest corner of the Kailāsa houses images of Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī in the main cella in three different niches.[7] The house is guarded by gigantic *dvārapālakas* (Pl. VI.2) who are *caturbhuja, sthānaka* and *dvibhaṅga*. They bear Śaivite emblems like the *ṭaṅka* and *mṛga* in *parahastas*. The front left hand is rested on a *gadā* which in turn is planted on earth. The front right is in *ūruhasta*. They wear tall *makuṭas, uttarīyas* and other ornaments.

The Nandi-*maṇḍapa* in its western niche consists of a colossal Gajasaṁhāramūrti, juxtaposed to which is another mammoth carving of Yogīśvara who appears on the plinth section of the monolithic temple at the centre of its eastern ridge. The collossus includes the *dikpālakas* who are eight in number. Those appearing on the right side of the Lord's head are Īśāna (bull), Agni (ram), Vāyu (antelope), Varuṇa (*makara*) and the left side Indra (elephant), Yama (buffalo), Nirṛtti (ass) and Kubera (*nara*). Īśāna appearing on bull, Nirṛtti on ass and Kubera on *nara-vāhana* are novelties of the specimen and it is in this place that the eight guardians of the directions appear together.

To the left of the Yogīśvara panel at the plinth level of the monolithic temple, there is an image of Brahmā who is seated in *ardhapadmāsana* on a *padmapīṭha*. The Lord is *trimukha* and *caturbhuja*. He holds the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū* in *parahastas*. The front right is in *abhayamudrā* and the left rested on thigh. All three faces are bearded and the heads decked with *jaṭāmakuṭas*. The Lord wears the *yajñopavīta*, a necklace and other ornaments. Adjoining the main niche, there are two small *koṣṭhas* in which images of Devīs appear. These seem to be Sāvitrī and Gāyatrī.

The main entrance to the *garbhagṛha* of the monolithic temple in its left consists of a *koṣṭha* in which is a seated image of Brahmā (Pl. XIV). The Lord is seated in *ardhapadmāsana* on a *padmapīṭha*. He is *caturbhuja* and holds the usual emblems in *parahastas*. He bears the *sruva* in one of the hands. He is bearded and polycephalous. He wears tall *jaṭāmakuṭas*.

The cellae to the monolithic Kailāsa and the Laṅkeśvara are guarded by the River Goddesses, Gaṅgā and Yamunā, as they appear in Cave XIV.

The row of sculptures appearing on the back corridor of the Kailāsa consists of nineteen iconographical illustrations of which two relate to Kalyāṇasundaramūrti and Tripurāntaka. In both the panels, Brahmā appears, doing *agnicārya* in the first and as charioteer in the second. In both the Lord is *trimukha*. In the same row an image of Liṅgodbhavamūrti appears and includes Brahmā as usual. The central niche in the back corridor, i.e., the tenth, houses an image of *Sthānaka*-Śiva. The niche within the architectural format of the Kailāsa as oriented to the Liṅga in the main *garbhagṛha* of the monolith, falls exactly behind the *mūlabera*, which means it is a figurative representation of the Lord's aniconic form, housed in the cella. The ninth niche, falling just to the right of Śiva, and the eleventh niche, falling to the left, are occupied by *Sthānaka*-Viṣṇu and *Sthānaka*-Brahmā respectively. Brahmā is *caturbhuja* and *trimukha*. He holds the usual emblems in *parahastas*. The front right hand is in *cinmudrā* (?) and the left *ūruhasta*. The Lord wears the *yajñopavīta*, *udarabandha*, and a long loin cloth. To the right below, the Lord's consort appears in dimunitive form. The association of Viṣṇu and Brahmā with the image of Śiva is of interest as viewed against the iconographical programme in the temple. It has been pointed out with reference to the Maṇṭakappaṭṭu inscription of Mahēndravarmaṉ I that the Trimūrti cult was very popular in early medieval South India. The placement of the Trimūrti images in the back corridor of the Kailāsa, spoken with reference to the Liṅga in the main cella, seems to lend further support to the popularity of the said cult. It may also be noted here that the Liṅga itself consists of three members, representing Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

The Laṅkeśvara on its back wall houses a panel of Trimūrti. All three are *sthānaka*-mūrtis in which Śiva is in centre, Viṣṇu to the left and Brahmā to the right. Brāhma is standing in *samapāda* and *caturbhuja*. The back right hand holds a *daṇḍa* and the front left in *ūruhasta* attitude. The other two hands are broken. The Lord is *trimukha* and attended by his consorts, Sāvitrī and Gāyatrī.

The panel of Trimūrtis found in Laṅkeśvara is of interest, spoken with reference to the same type, housed on the back corridor of the monolithic temple. It may be noted that similar works appear in Cave XXVII of Ellora and the Tiruccirāppaḷḷi lower cave. There is a stray image in the Mahākūṭeśvara temple at Mahākūṭa and carving of Trimūrtis, little beyond the Bhūtanātha temple at Badāmī. In most of these panels (Laṅkeśvara, Badāmī and Mahākūṭa), Śiva takes the central place while Brahmā and Śiva are to the right and left respectively. In cave XXVII of Ellora, Viṣṇu is in centre with Brahmā to his right and Śiva to the left. The changing pattern in respect of Brahmā's place is of significance and may serve as a pointer to identify his place within the Hindu pantheon of the times. In this respect the Tiruccirāppaḷḷi cave gets an important place by projecting Brahmā as the foremost principle.

Another important deity appearing in the Laṅkeśvara is Sūrya. He is *samapāda-sthānaka* and *dvibhuja*, holding *padmas* in both hands.

The *garbhagṛha* of Laṅkeśvara houses an image of Trimūrti in its back wall. It is the only one of its type found in a main cave in Ellora. Such images mostly appear in the small caves above the hill, close to Kailāsa and the Gaṇeśa-*leṇa* group. A small cella, found close to the Nandi-*maṇḍapa* in Cave XV, also houses such a specimen.

Cave XVII

The outer lying portion of the cave beyond the *sabhāmaṇḍapa*, the *mukhamaṇḍapa* section, in its left side provides the venue for an image of Brahmā, carved on the back wall. It seems to have been a subsidiary cave originally but no such annexure exists now but the rocky scraps above point to the case in consideration. Exactly opposite to the figure of Brahmā and the cella meant for him there seems to have existed another cave in which an image of Viṣṇu was originally installed. The cave and the image now are badly mutilated. K.V. Soundararajan is of opinion that the part of the cave was excavated later while the main cave is of Cāḷukyan origin.[8] Even if non-Chāḷukyan, the additions to Cave XVII may not be outside the orbit of our area and may have been the work of Rāṣṭrakūṭa times. K.V. Soundararajan's argument that the stylistic features of the images of Brahmā and Gaṇapati (in the main cave) do not agree holds good but we might keep in mind similar carvings (akin to Brahmā) found in Cave XXVIII. The point is additions to Cave XVII fall within the chronological format of our study.

The image of Brahmā is one of the most outstanding (Pl. XV.2). The Lord stands in *samapāda* attitude on a *padmapīṭha*. He is *caturbhuja* and *trinetra*. The hands bear a *daṇḍa* and *akṣamālā* in back hands. The *pūrvahastas* exhibit *abhaya* and *ūru*, the latter broken. The heads are fitted with *jaṭāmakuṭas* and the loin a long cloth. The Lord is attended by two Devīs, possibly Sāvitrī and Gāyatrī. Both the goddesses are standing in *samapāda* attitude and are *dvibhuja*. *Vidyādharas* appear above the panel who hold their hands in *añjalibandha*.

The possibility of a separate chapel being provided to Brahmā in Cave XVII is a good case in consideration. We have several Trimūrti caves in South India during the period under study. Beginning with Maṇṭagappaṭṭu, which provides epigraphical evidences in support of the argument, the other caves includes those in Moghulrājapuram, Māmallapuram and several others in the Pallava country. But in these cases no image of

Brahmā appears in the cella. In Cave III of Moghulrājapuram the cella meant for Brahmā in its outer face at the level of cornice consists of a *kūḍu* motif within which the *trimukha*-Brahmā appears. In similar such locations in the same cave images of Śiva and Viṣṇu appear within *kūḍu* (Pl. II.2). It is to show that originally impressions of Brahmā, may be his paintings, are likely to have appeared within the cella. It could have been the case in Maṇṭakappaṭṭu. Speaking with reference to these evidences, Brahmā occupying the cella in a cave need not be a far fetched idea (cf. the cella for Brahmasāsta in Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa* at Mānallapuram). Further, the hypothesis is supported by K.V. Soundararajan's thesis that the subsidiary shrines, carved in the *maṇḍapa* part of Cave XV (*Daśāvatāra*) should have been meant for Brahmā and Viṣṇu.[9] It is likely that a separate cella for Brahmā was provided in Cave XVII of Ellora. The uniqueness of the cave consists in setting the image of the Lord within the womb house.

Speaking with due reference to Cave XV and XVII of Ellora, it may be of interest to note that the cellae lie in a triangle, the apex being occupied by Śiva in his aniconic Liṅga form. Brahmā appears to the left and Viṣṇu to the right in Cave XVII. The order is likely to have been reversed in Cave XV since the row of Vaiṣṇava sculptures in the particular cave appear to the left of the Liṅga, housed in the *sanctum sanctorum*. We may note here that in the Tiruchirāppaḷḷi lower cave, assigned to the Pāṇḍyas, a similar but faint impression is to be found. In the case there are two cellae on lateral sides, the west facing cella being occupied by an image of *Sthānaka*-Viṣṇu and the east facing cella a Liṅga. The back wall of the cave consists of five niches of which the central one is occupied by Brahmā. Thus, there is a triangular pattern in which the apex is occupied by Brahmā. It is simply unique in the entire range of early medieval temples wherein Brahmā receives a pivotal treatment.

Cave XX

Caves XVIII and XIX are Śaiva but do not consist of any iconographical illustration. Cave XX is iconographically bereft but houses a good specimen of *Padmanidhi* at the *façade* level on its right side. There is no corresponding *Śaṅkhanidhi* and possibly the sculpture was damaged.

Padmanidhi is of the usual type that we have already noted in the Kailāsa. He is seated in *lalitāsana* posture, the left leg being laid on the pedestal and the right vertically planted. He is *dvibhuja*. The left hand is leisurely placed on a pillow upon which the Lord is gracefully reclining and the right holds the *padma*.The image is profusely ornamented with *kuṇḍalas, mālās, kaṅkanas, keyūras* and a *kīrīṭamakuṭa*. Though a guardian, stationed at the gateway, the minor god is attended by *vidhyādharas* who appear above the panel.

Cave XXI (Rāmeśvara)

The main *garbhagṛha* is subjoined by two mammoth images of *dvārapālakas* at the doorstep. They are *dvibhuja*, having the left arm rested on the *puñjam* of the loin cloth as though in *ūruhasta*. Gaṅgā and Yamunā appear at the *façade* (Pl. XXXIX).

The beauty of Rāmeśvara is that it is decorated with a cavalcade of *surasundarī* motifs who appear as brackets, appended to the pillars at the *ardhamaṇḍapa* level. Their significance with due reference to Yoninilayā, housed on the Nandi-*maṇḍapa*, has been explained (*vide*, Vol. III).

The pavilion appearing on the right extremity of the *ardhamaṇḍapa* houses a series of narrative sculptures on its back wall which pertain to the marriage of Śiva with Umā. The middle panel is on Kalyāṇasundaramūrti who is attended by the *trimukha*-Brahmā, doing the *agnicārya*. He is found pouring the sacrificial *havis* into the *agnikuṇḍa*.

There is another interesting panel, which appears to the right side of Kalyāṇasundaramūrti. Here the Lord, Brahmā, is seated on a *bhadrapīṭha* in *pralambapāda* attitude. He is *trimukha* and *dvibhuja*. The *pralambapāda* attitude and *dvibhuja* character are typical of the image. He has the right leg lifted with possibly the *akṣamālā*, inserted in between the thumb and index finger, posed as though in *cinmudrā*. The left hand is rested on the thigh. Brahmā is found talking with another seated figure, possibly Himavan, attended by his wife, Mena, with whom the possibility of the marriage between Śiva and Umā is discussed, may be as narrated by Kālidāsa in the *Kumārasaṁbhava*. Another individual is found seated behind Brahmā in the same *bhadrapīṭha* who is in *pralambapāda* attitude, having his right hand placed on Brahmā's shoulder. The identification of the personality is difficult but it may be suggested that he represents the great *ṛṣis* who according to the *Kumārasaṁbhava* (Canto 6) are supposed to have settled the marriage between Śiva and Umā. Iconographically speaking, it is one of the most important works because no such representation is known to exist within the area of our study though Brahmā appearing in the Kalyāṇasundaramūrti panels is almost a pan-Indian theme through the ages.

The Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti panel appearing on the right back wall of the *ardhamaṇḍapa* includes some rare features. Rāvaṇa who usually appears showing his back is found frontal, all five faces looking forward. His ten hands are engaged in lifting the Kailāsa.

Naṭarāja doing *caturam* is an interesting piece of work in which the *dikpālakas* appear atop the panel, along with Brahmā and Viṣṇu. To the right of Naṭarāja appear Brahmā and Viṣṇu, seated on their vehicles the *haṁsa* and *garuḍa-puruṣa*. On the left side are four *dikpālakas* who are seated on *gaja* (Indra), *mahiṣa* (Yama), *nara* (Nirṛtti) and *makara* (Varuṇa).

Cave XXIV

The ceiling of the *ardhamaṇḍapa* houses an image of Sūrya, the only member of the Navagraha group to be found among early medieval monuments. The Sun God is found mounted on a moving chariot, pulled by six horses with a human figure in centre. Sūrya's image appears above the knee who is in *samapāda-sthānaka* attitude. He is *dvibhuja* and holds *padmas* in both hands. He is attended by Sāyā and Uṣā who hold bows in their hands in the attitude of shooting arrows in *ālīḍhāsana* posture.

The *dvārapālakas* found in the cave are colossal figures, about 10' tall. Both are *dvibhuja* and hold *khaḍgas*. The other hands bear *padmas*.

The *mukhamaṇḍapa* of the cave at its left extremity houses an image of *Padmanidhi*. He is a collossus, seated in *sukhāsana* attitude. He is *dvibhuja* and the right hand to hold the *padma* is found broken. The Lord wears a *karaṇḍamakuṭa*, big necklace, *uttarīya*, *udarabandha* and other ornaments. He is attended by *vidyādharas* who appear above.

The cave is an elaborate structure that consists of a *nirandhara* type of cella, fitted with three *maṇḍapas; ardha, mahā* and *mukha*. The *mukhamaṇḍapa* at its left extremity consists of a small cella. At the right extremity remnants of a *padmapīṭha* is found. The arrangement recalls to memory similar structures found in Caves XV and XVII of Ellora. That is to say that in these two subsidiary shrines images of Brahmā (right) and Śiva are likely to have been housed. The main cella could have been dedicated to Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa.

Cave XXVII

The Milk Maids cave in its *mukhamaṇḍapa* provides for a panel of Trimūrtis in a pattern analogous to the Laṅkeśvara of Ellora and the Tirucirāppaḷḷi lower cave. What is important here is that Viṣṇu appears in the middle with Śiva to his left and Brahmā to the right. Brahmā is *samapāda-sthānaka* and *caturbhuja*. He holds a *gadā* and *padma* in the *parahastas*. The front right hand holds the *akṣamālā* and the left is in *ūruhasta*. K.V. Soundararajan identifies the *gadā* with the *sruk*.

Cave XXIX (Ḍumārleṇa)

Brahmā and the *dikpālakas* appear in the cave but their status is akin to what one finds in the Elephanta main cave. The *sarvatobhadra* Liṅga shrine is a marvel wherein eight gigantic *dvārapālakas* appear, guarding the four doorways to the shrine. Iconographically, they are akin to the Elephanta models. All are *dvibhuja*, having the left hand rested on the *puñjam* of the loin cloth. It is interesting to find that each of the *dvārapālakas* are attended by female assistants. Atop the *vidyādharas* and *apsarase* appear.

The *dikpālakas* are associated with Naṭarāja, Kalyāṇasundaramūrti and Dice Game. The Naṭarāja of the *Ḍumārleṇa* is one of the most outstanding on the subject. On the top right the following are found, seated on their *vāhanas*: (from the right corner) Nirṛtti (*nara*), Agni (ram), Yama (buffalo) and Indra (elephant). Onthe left top the following four appear: Kubera (*padmapīṭha*), Varuṇa (rhinoceros), Vāyu (deer) and Īśāna ? (bull-calf).

The Kalyāṇasundaramūrti panel includes *vidyādharas* and *apsarase* in addition to the *dikpālakas*, all floating above the sky. On the right side of the panel, the following *dikpālakas* appear as seated on their vehicles: (from the right to left) Īśāna (bull), Nirṛtti (*nara*), Vāyu (deer), Agni (ram) and Yama (buffalo). To the left the following two are present: Indra (elephant) and Varuṇa (*makara*). The panel includes Brahmā who is seated near the left foot of Siva. He is *trimukha* and engaged in performing the *agnicārya*.

The 'Dice Game' panel includes a number of deities on top, may be the *dikpālakas*, *vidyādharas* and *apsarase*. The *dikpālakas* appear alone without being accompanied by their insignia, the *vāhanas*. Below, Nandi appears in zoomorphic form.

The Caṇḍikeśvara panel includes *Nāgas* and *Nāginīs* who appear below the *padmapīṭha* in the attitude of adoration. Two of them hold the stalk of the lotus. All are anthropomorphic but for the *nāga* hood.

Smaller Caves

The small caves found above the hill of Kailāsa, Nīlakaṇṭha, the Gaṇeśa-*leṇa* group, Laṅkeśvara and one close to the Nandi-*maṇḍapa* of *Daśāvatāra* are important for a study of Trimūrti images. There are not less than a dozen caves above the hill, close to Kailāsa, Cave XVI. Many of these caves contain images of Trimūrti who appear on the back wall of the cave, the Liṅga being housed in the centre. In these representations the thematic treatment is akin to the Elephanta prototype. In the Gaṇeśa-*leṇa* group there are seven Trimūrti representations in which three have Brahmā on the right side and the other four being on the Elephanta pattern with Rudra to the right. The emblems attributed to Brahmā-*bhāga* is of some interest. Few of them attribute the *darpaṇa* 'mirror' which is an idiom associated with feminine beings (e.g., Ardhanārīśvara in his *nari* half holds it). In few other cases the *akṣamālā* and *ñānamudrā*, both of which could be attributed to Brahmā. Thus, these emblems support our hypothesis that the third face in Trimūrti should be Brahmā and not Vāmadeva, a member of Sadāśiva composite form as suggested by scholars, e.g. Stella Kramrisch.

Bhokardān

The septa-cellar cave should have included one for Brahmā in its organisation. The cellae are incomplete but for the bas reliefs appearing on the side walls of the cave.

Even the images found on side walls are badly mutilated. Yet we are able to trace impressions of Trimūrtis on the right wall in a pattern that should have originally appeared as in case of the Laṅkeśvara and XXVII of Ellora. On the left side wall the heads of Trimūrti alone appear.

Takli Ḍhokeśvara

The cave on the left side of the *garbhagṛha* in a separate enclosure provides for a couchant Nandi in zoomorphic form. The cave is *sāndhāra* and *sarvatobhadra*. Usually Nandi appears axially aligned to the main image in its front side. In Takli Dhokeśvara the Nandi appears to the left.

An important point to be noted is that in early medieval temples Nandi is not a compulsory member, appearing in association with the *mūlabera* as in the Takli Ḍhokeśvara cave. Nandi in Cave XV Ellora is a stray piece placed in the *mahamaṇḍapa*. Caves XVI, XXII and XXIII have separate Nandi-*maṇḍapas*. In XXI there is an open Nandi-*maṇḍapa*. In the case of Caves XVII, XVIII, XIX, XX and the XXIV group no Nandi appears. Nandi as present in several of the caves is zoomorphic, couchant and axially placed in relation to the *mūlabera*. Most outstanding among the Nandi-*maṇḍapa* is one found in front of the Pātāleśvara cave temple at Pune. It is circular in shape, supported by twelve massive pillars, and consists of a square *pīṭha* for Nandi. The *pīṭha* is supported by four pillars and approachable on all cardinal directions by flights of steps. The circular *maṇḍapa* is provided with steps in the east and west. In its architectural set up the Nandi-*maṇḍapa* of Pātāleśvara excels the same *maṇḍapa* in the Kailāsa, Ellora. Even the one in the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñci is simple and not the Virūpākṣa at Paṭṭadakkal.

Aṅkai-Taṅkai

The Aṅkai-Taṅkai group on the way from Manmad to Auraṅgābād in one of its caves provides for Trimūrti.[10] In a pattern that the smaller caves in Ellora accommodate the Lord on the back wall with the Liṅga in the centre. It is the only cave in Upper Deccan, next to Ellora, to have such an iconographic programme. Then, comes Bhairavakoṇḍa in the Peṉṉār basin, near Nellore.

CONSOLIDATION

The iconographical variables present in the Upper Deccan are Brahmā, the *Dikpālakas*, the *Nidhis* (*Śaṅkha* and *Padma*) and Sūrya. The list of minor deities includes Gaṅgā-Yamunā, Nandi, *Garuḍa*, Bhṛṅgi, Bhagīratha, Himavan, Taṇḍu, *Dvārapālakas*, *Vidyādharas*, *Apsarase*, *Surasundarīs*, *Nāga-Nagī*, Cauri-bearers, dwarf *gaṇas* and *maithuna* figures. Among the demons who form part of iconographical forms of other deities are Rāvaṇa, Mahiṣāsura, Gajāsura and Dakṣa, the Prajāpati.

Totally 71 specimens are listed of which the majority are from the Ellora caves, Elephanta coming next. Jogeśvarī, Maṇḍapeśvara, Bhokardān and Aṅkai-Taṅkai are other notable centres. Ellora as usual has yielded the maximum (totally 47, 68%) number of specimens. Elephanta comes next (totally 16, 23%). In an overall perspective, these two centres constitute a veritable museum for a study of iconography of the period.

Among the various deities, Brahmā takes the place of pride. Totally 49 (71%) specimens are found either independently or as part and parcel of other subjects. The independent images are comparatively less (totally 9.13%). He forms part of Śaiva iconographical subjects (totally 21. 30%) and appears as a integral member of the triune, Trimūrti (totally 19. 27%).

Independent images of Brahmā are either seated or standing. His *vāhana* is the *haṁsa*.

He is either seated on a *haṁsapīṭha* or *padmapīṭha*. He is always polycephalous (*trimukha*) and *caturbhuja*. The emblems carried by him are mostly the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū*, his characteristic attributes. He also carries the *sruk* and *sruva*, and has the hands exhibiting *abhayamudrā* or rested on the thigh. In most panels he appears all alone. At times (Ellora XVI and XVII) he is attended by his consorts, Sāvitrī and Gāyatrī.

As a member of the Śaivite subjects, Brahmā mostly appears on the right side of an iconographical form of Śiva like Liṅgodbhavamūrti, Yogīśvara, Naṭarāja, Dice Game, Ardhanārīśvara,Gaṅgādhara, Lakulīśa (Maṇḍapeśvara), Kalyāṇasundaramūrti and Tripurāntaka. The subsidiary cave in Elephanta finds Brahmā as a member of the Skanda panel. Numerically speaking, Elephanta has yielded several Śaivite panels in which Brahmā forms a part.

The place of Brahmā in few of the cave temples of the Upper Deccan is very striking. A *trikūṭa* pattern of arrangement is traceable in Caves XXII, XX and XXV. Similarly, the image of *Sthānaka*- Brahmā, appearing behind the main *garbhagṛha* of the Kailāsa, as a member of the Trimūrtis panel is a significant representation. These stand proof of the Trimūrti orientation of the early medieval cave temples for which there are ample evidences in other zones.

The *Dikpālakas* appear in huge numbers in the Ellora and Elephanta caves, six each from out of a total of 15. Mostly they form part of other iconographical subjects, mainly Śaiva. There is a unique piece of Mahiṣāsuramardinī which includes the *dikpālakas* (Ellora XVI). Śaivite panels illustrating Naṭarāja, Kalyāṇasundaramūrti, Yogīśvara, Lakulīśa, Dice Game, Gajasaṁhāramūrti and Ardhanārīśvara include the *dikpālakas*. It is a phenmenon familiar with the Elephanta and Ellora caves only. In other zones the mode completely changes.

Cave XVI of Ellora is unique in several respects. The *dikpālakas* appear at the *façade* level. There are eight niches, meant for them, but few could not be properly identified. The kind of iconographic programme adds a new dimension to the cave temples of South India, not to be found anywhere else. Independent representation of the *dikpālakas* is rare. Yama constitutes an integral part of the Kālāri subject (e.g., Cave XV, Ellora). The *dikpālakas* are mostly found atop any iconographical illustration, as though flying, seated on their respective vehicles. All the eight as a rule do not appear. Conspicuous among them are Indra, Varuṇa, Yama, Agni and Nirṛtti.

Sūrya appears in only one cave temple (no. XXV of Ellora), mounted on his chariot. *Śaṅkha* and *Padmanidhis* appear in Caves XVI, XX and XXV. Among the minor deities, Nandi is independent who has a special pavilion for him (Takli Ḍhokeśvara, Ellora caves XV, XVI, XXI and XXII).

REFERENCES

1. The *haṁsa* 'swan' is the Lord's vehicle which provides the cushion for him in the temples of the Deccan. Good examples are to be found in and around Aihole.
2. The attendants deities associated with major iconographical themes are noted in Vol. II.
3. The minor deities associated with major Vaiṣṇava themes are noted in Vol. I.
4. For a detailed examination of the *gopura* sculptures see Vols. I and II. M.B. Heston, "Iconographic themes of the *gopura* of the Kailāsanātha temple at Ellora", *Artibus Asiae*, XLIII, 1981, pp. 219-35.
5. R.S. Gupta, *Iconography of the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains*, Fig. 14.
6. The *makara* in almost all illustrations is *yāḷi*-like.
7. The minor deities of the Devī pantheon are elaborated in Vol. III.
8. K.V. Soundararajan, *Cave Temples of the Deccan*, pp. 149-52.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 177 n.
10. James Fergusson, *The Cave Temples of India*, p. 480.

TABLE I
DISTRIBUTION OF ICONOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES: UPPER DECCAN

Iconographical variables	Distribution pattern: placewise						
	Ele.	Joges.	Maṇḍa.	Ell.	Bho.	A-T	Total
Brahmā:							
p/o Śaivite themes	9	1	1	10	-	-	21
seated	-	-	-	3	-	-	3
standing	-	-	-	6	-	-	6
Trimūrti	1	-	-	16	1	1	19
Somāskanda	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Dikpālakas:							
p/o other themes	6	1	1	6	-	-	14
independent	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Śaṅkha and *Padma-nidhi*	-	-	-	3	-	-	3
Sūrya	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
Candra	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Total	16	2	2	49	1	1	71

Abbreviations:				
	Ele.	Elephanta,	Joges.	Jogeśvarī,
	Maṇḍa.	Maṇḍapeśvara,	Bho.	Bhokardān,
	A-T.	Aṅkai-Taṅkai,	p/o	part of

CHAPTER III

Iconographical Survey: Lower Deccan and the Kṛṣṇā Delta

The cave temples in the Lower Deccan are not promising for a study of Brahmā and the minor deities. No important carving of Brahmā appears as in the Ellora caves, excepting rare panels of Trimūrtis in Badāmī and Mahākūṭa. In the structural temples of Aihole, the Trimūrti panels acquire a shape that add to the significance attached to the images. In these cases they appear on the ceiling, just in front of the *garbhagṛhas*. Similarly, in the temples of Alampūr the *dikpālakas* attain a new status by being arranged at the plinth level in the quarters reserved for them. There are interesting miniatures in the temples of Paṭṭadakkal.

BADĀMĪ

The caves of Badāmi house no independent image of Brahmā. There are some interesting ceiling panels in caves II and III that illustrate Brahmā and the *dikpālakas*.

Cave I

At the right extremity of the cave at its *façade* level there is an important image of *kṣetrapālaka* or *dvārapālaka* as K.V. Soundararajan would call him (Pl. XXV.1). The image is standing in *samapāda* attitude with the legs placed at ease. He is *dvibhuja* and holds a *triśūla* in the right hand. The left is in *ūruhasta* attitude. He wears a *karaṇḍamakuṭa, uttarīya* and other ornaments. A halo appears behind the head. The *puñjam* appears on the right hip level but the hand is not placed on it as in the Ellora types.[1]

The Harihara relief, appearing on the left *koṣṭha* of the *mukhamaṇḍapa*, includes two dwarf attendants, Nandi in theriomorphic form and *Garuḍa-puruṣa*. Nandi has a bull head and human body. He holds a spear in his right hand. *Garuḍa* stands on the Viṣṇu side with his hands fastened to the body.

The Ardhanārīśvara panel, appearing on the left *koṣṭha*, includes a zoomorphic Nandi who appears behind the Lord and Bhṛṅgi who is emaciated and holds the hands in *añjalibandha*.

Cave II

Dvārapālakas appear on either extremity of the *façade* who are *dvibhuja, sthānaka* and *dvibhaṅga*. Life size figures, both are attended by dwarf female assistants. In both cases the left hand is in *ūruhasta* attitude, placed on the *puñjam* of the cloth tied to the hip. The right hand is lifted above. Both wear exuberant ornaments, *uttarīya* and *karaṇḍamakuṭas*.

The *mukhamaṇḍapa* section of the cave at its cornice consists of a number of miniatures. There are a number of interesting carvings of which two are important. One is that of Devī and the other Śiva. In both cases the divinities are attended by Brahmā and Viṣṇu. Brahmā is *caturbhuja, sthānaka* and carries the *akṣamālā, puṣtaka* and *kamaṇḍalū*. The fourth hand is in *ūruhasta* attitude. There is also a panel of Śeṣaśāyī in which Brahmā appears on the *padmanābhi*.

Of the major sculptural work in the cave Bhūvarāhamūrti includes the *nāga* upon whose coils the Lord has his leg placed. *Nāga* has a human body with the *nāga* hood fitted. He holds the hands in *añjalibandha* attitude. A *nāginī* appears behind. The other important work illustrates the lord Trivikrama whose attendants include Vāmana, Bali, Sukrācārya, Jāmbavat, Nemuchi, Bali's queen, *vidyādharas* and others. The plinth provides for an array of *bhūtagaṇas* (Pl. LIII).

Cave III

The main sculptures in the cave are six which relate to the various aspects of Viṣṇu. Ādimūrti is seated on the coils of a gigantic Śeṣa whose hoods appear above the Lord's head. Bhūvarāhamūrti appears in the same posture as in Cave II. So is the case with Trivikrama, one of the most rhythmic and classical works on the subject.

There are a number of miniature carvings at the cornice level of the cave in the *mukhamaṇḍapa*. The pillars at the front row of the cave are appended with interesting miniature carvings. Of the miniatures one pertains to Trimūrtis in which Brahmā appears.

The ceiling in the *mukhamaṇḍapa* illustrates Brahmā who appears close to the Kevala-Nṛsiṁha panel. The Lord is seated on *haṁsavāhana*. He is *caturbhuja* and holds the *kamaṇḍalū* and *puṣtaka* in *parahastas*. The front right hand is in *kaṭakamudrā* and left placed on thigh.

Of the most striking is the panel of *dikpālakas*, appearing on ceiling of the *mahāmaṇḍapa* (Pls. XXX.1-2, XXXI.1). It consists of a rectangular slab, divided into nine square boxes. The middle slab is occupied by Brahmā who appears on *haṁsavāhana*. He is polycephalous and *caturbhuja*. The *parahastas* hold the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū* while the *pūrvahastas* exhibit different *mudrās*. The Lord is attended by *vidyādharas*. The *dikpālakas* appear on their respective vehicles; Indra on elephant, Varuṇa on *makara*, Kubera on ram and Yama appears with his Devīs. The place meant for Īśāna is broken. The other *dikpālakas* appear with Devīs. Their vehicles are not to be found.

A boulder near the Bhūtanātha temple illustrates a number of themes of which one relates to the Trimūrtis, Śiva taking the central place. Viṣṇu is to the Left and Brahmā to the right (Pl. XVII.1). All are *sthānaka* in *samapāda* attitude. They carry their characteristic emblems, thus Brahmā possesses the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū* in *parahastas*. The image is akin to the one found in the Laṅkeśvara of Ellora and contrasts with Cave XXVII of Ellora and the Tirucirāppaḷḷi lower cave.

The Badāmī Museum houses a fine image of coiled Ādiśeṣa (Pl. XLI.1).

Mahākūṭa

The Mahākūṭeśvara temple is a repository of stray carvings. In one of the slabs a miniature of Trimūrtis is carved, which specimen appears just behind the main temple. The illustration is akin to the piece carved on the stray boulder, near the Bhūtanātha temple at Badāmī. Śiva is to the centre and Brahmā to the right. Brahmā is *sthānaka* in *samapāda* attitude and *caturbhuja*. He holds the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū* in *pūrvahastas*. The front left is in *ūruhasta* and the right *abhayamudrā*.

Paṭṭadakkal

There are few interesting miniatures of Brahmā, Sūrya and the *dikpālakas* in the structural temples of Paṭṭadakkal.

The *agramaṇḍapa*, forming the main entrance to the Virūpākṣa temple, in its ceiling lodges Sūrya (Pl. XXVI), mounted on the chariot. He is *sthānaka* and in *samapāda* attitude. He is *dvibhuja* and holds *padmas* in both hands. The Lord wears a *pītāṁbara*, *uttarīya*, *karaṇḍamakuṭa* and other ornaments. The chariot is pulled by seven horses. Sāyā and Uṣā appear on either side, shooting arrows with the use of bows. On both sides of the Lord a number of attendants are found. The image gets closer to the one in Cave XXIV of Ellora but is thematically an improved version.

The main entrance (*dvāra*) to the temple is guarded by the *Śaṅkha-* and *Padma- nidhis*, seated on *siṁhāsanas*. It is in agreement with Cave XVI of Ellora. It may be noted here that no such representation appears in the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñci. That is to say the *nidhis* should have been an innovation of the Cāḷukyan artists of Paṭṭadakkal, which idiom the Rāṣṭrakūṭa artists appropriate for their masterpiece, the Kailāsa of Ellora.[2]

The *agramaṇḍapa* appearing on the left side of the temple in its ceiling houses an image of Brahmā in a pattern similar to the one noted in Cave III of Badāmī. The Lord is seated on a *padmāsana* in *ardhapadmāsana* attitude. The front right hand is placed on the lap in *dhyānamudrā* attitude. The front left is in *cinmudrā* with the *akṣamālā* fitted into it. The Lord is polycephalous and attended by two *ṛṣis*, seated on either side. The panel is encirlced by an ornate frame within which a number of divinities, perhaps *vidyādharas*, appear. Outlying the circles, a square frame is found. At the four corners of the frame four attendants appear in reclining attitude.

The *mahāmaṇḍapa* of the cave in one of its pillars has a miniature of Trimūrtis. The central figure is Śiva who is seated, attended by Brahmā and Viṣṇu standing on both sides. Brahmā is to the right who holds his usual emblems in *parahastas*.

The Kāśi-Viśvanātha temple is famous for its miniatures, housed in different sections of the *maṇḍapa*, includes *dikpālakas* in two of the iconographical subjects dealing with Śiva. Liṅgodbhavamūrti among them is a remarkable piece which in addition to Brahmā and Viṣṇu also includes the *dikpālakas*.[3] Brahmā standing to the right is *caturbhuja* and holds the *kamaṇḍalū* and *akṣamālā* in *parahastas*. The *pūrvahastas* are in *añjalibandha*. *Dikpālakas* present on the occasion are Yama, Varuṇa, Agni and Indra, seated on their respective vehicles, viz., the buffalo, *makara*, ram and elephant. The *dikpālakas* appearing within the framework of a Śaivite theme is not a new feature as they are to be found on such occasions in the caves of Elephanta and Ellora redundantly but their presence in the Liṅgodbhavamūrti panel is a novel subject. Paṭṭadakkal seems to be the only source of such an idea. Another important theme, new to Paṭṭadakkal, is Somāskandamūrti who appears on the ceiling, just in front of the *garbhagṛha*. The panel is akin to Brahmā found in Cave III Badāmī. That is to say the main Mūrti is encircled by the *aṣṭadikpālakas*. Indra, seated on elephant, is found in the central square in the eastern section of the panel. Agni, Īśāna, Yama, Kubera and Vāyu are found in their respective quarters seated on ram, bull, buffalo, ram (?) and antelope. The space meant for Nirṛtti and Varuṇa are defaced.

The Mallikārjuna temple in its *antarāla* section houses Umāsahitamūrti in the ceiling. The panel is akin to the Somāskandamūrti of Kāśi-Viśvanātha because it includes the *aṣṭadikpālakas*.

Aihole

Most important among the temples of Aihole are the Hucchapayya and Kont-*guḍis*. These two temples on the ceiling house images of the Trimūrtis, including Brahmā (Pl. XVI). Thematically, the subject is the same as found them in the Laṅkeśvara of Ellora but their placement is a new idea. The type of representation is typical of the Aihole temples.[4]

The specimen found in the Hucchapayya temple is one of the outstanding on the subject. Brahmā (Pl. XVII.2), is seated on his bird vehicle in the *pralambapāda* attitude. Both the legs are widened so that the head of the bird peeps in centre, just above the Lord's genital organ. The bird has its wings spread upon which Brahmā is seated comfortably. The bird is frontal and rests on a *padmapīṭha*. Brahmā is polycephalous with the heads decked with short *jaṭāmakuṭas*. He is *caturbhuja*, holding *kamaṇḍalū* (looks like a guard), *puṣtaka*, *cinmudrā* fitted with *akṣamālā* and *padma*. The Lord wears simple ornaments, an *ekāvali* necklace and *uttarīya*. The *uttarīya* seems to be a *kṛṣṇajīna* as the head of a deer is carved on it. It is a rare element that one finds in association with Brahmā in early medieval art.[5] On both sides a number of *ṛṣis* appear in worshipful attitude. Three of them are found above, floating in the skies, resembling *vidyādharas*. They are emaciated. The novelties of the image are: (1) emaciated *ṛṣis* attending on the Lord, (2) the seated posture and the vehicle, and (3) the placement of the image. Of the three Mūrtis, Brahmā occupies an important place, being juxtaposed with the *dvāra* of the *garbhagṛha*.

Another important feature of the Hucchapayya temple is that it is decorated with a number of *maithuna* motifs on the *pāda* section in its outer face. Thus, the temple gets closer to Badāmī Cave III and Cave XXI of Ellora. Among the erotic carvings few relate to *yakṣīs* in the attitude of making love or enticing men.[6]

The Kont-*guḍi* is another important shrine which houses Brahmā (Pl. XVIII) in its ceiling along with Śiva and Viṣṇu-Śeṣaśāyī. Brahmā appears to the right of the centrally placed Śiva. Brahmā is polycephalous, seated on a fully blossomed *padma* in *sukhāsana* attitude. He is *caturbhuja* and holds the *akṣamālā* fitted into the hand in *cinmudrā* posture, a guard-like *kamaṇḍalū*, a garland and one placed on thigh. Both thematically and iconographically it is one of the best on the subject.

The subshrine, lying in front of the main temple, lodges an image of Brahmā in the ceiling in front of the *garbhagṛha* (Pl. II.1). The representation is akin to Badāmī Cave III in which the Lord is surrounded by the *aṣṭadikpālakas*. The panel is divided into nine squares of which the central place is occupied by Brahmā. The Lord is *caturbhuja* and seated in *padmāsana* attitude. He is *trimukha* and wears *jaṭāmakuṭas*. He holds the *padmas* in *parahastas*. The front right hand is in *abhayamudrā*. The *dikpālakas* appear in the usual pattern as seated on their respective vehicles. Indra is on elephant, Īśāna on bull, Yama on buffalo, Nirṛtti on *nara*, Agni on ram (or horse?) and the other two are defaced .

Other temples in the main camp at Aihole are not that important. The Uccimalli-*guḍi* in its step-well consists of a stray slab which illustrates a God seated on *yāli* (*makara ?*) *vāhana*. He is *dvibhuja* and seated in *sukhāsana*. It is likely to be a stray piece of Varuṇa.

The Hucchapayya-*guḍi* on the way to the Rāmaliṅga group of temples houses an image of Naṭarāja who includes Yama and Agni among the *dikpālakas*. Yama is seated on the buffalo with his Devi, Yamī. Agni is as usual on his goat vehicle. *Śaṅkhanidhi* and *Padmanidhi* are found at the doorway.

Another important temple is found among the Rāmaliṅga *devasthānam* group. The temple is significant because an image of Viṣṇu appears on *vimāna* in its front elevation. The temple in its ceiling houses an image of Brahmā who is seated on the *haṁsavāhana*. He is *caturbhuja*, holding the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū* in *parahastas*. The figure is partly defaced but important as Brahmā is subjoined with Viṣṇu-Ādimūrti in a pattern that the Trimūrtis appear in the Hucchapayya and Kont-*guḍis*.

Another west facing temple in the Rāmaliṅga *devasthānam* group is noted for its iconographic programme at the *pāda* section. Eight divinities appear at the location, two to the north, three to the east and three to the south. Moving in the *pradakṣiṇa* pattern one finds Vāyu on the northwest corner who is seated on an antelope. The next figure is goat-headed who appears in the place of Kubera. The third one does not appear on the northeast corner but to the left of the central figure on the east. The middle one in the case is Sūrya who goes riding his chariot. To his left is one seated on the bull, may be Īśāna. He is *caturbhuja*. It is interesting to find Sūrya replacing Indra. The fifth figure, should be Agni, is defaced. The sixth one is Yama who as regent of the south appears in the quarter meant for him. The eight one is Nirṛtti who is seated on *nara-vāhana*. The seventh figure is not good for identification. He is one who appears with hands folded in *añjalibandha*. All are not *dikpālakas*. Excepting Vāyu, Agni, Yama and Nirṛtti all others pose problems of identification. What is unique in the present temple is that the *dikpālakas*, atleast few of them, appear in the regions meant for them. It is the only temple in the core Cāḷukyan zone to show such a kind of programme. Similar types are found in the Eastern Cāḷukyan temples at Alampūr.

The *Rāvulaphaḍi* cave, houses a number of iconographical illustrations pertaining to Śiva and Devī houses but no image of Brahmā. The *antarāla* section of the cave which includes images of Bhūvarāhamūrti and Mahiṣāsuramardinī houses a divinity seated on elephant in its ceiling (Pl. XXX.3). He is *dvibhuja* and holds the *vajra* in the right hand. The left hand is in *ūruhasta* attitude. It is Indra who appears at such a location for the first and last time in a cave temple. The *façade* of the case consists of *Śaṅkha* and *Padma -nidhis* both seated in the usual pattern (Pl. XLIII). The Jyotirliṅga group accommodates Brahmā on a pillar (Pl. XIX.2).

An important feature of the Cāḷukyan temples is the coiled Ādiśeṣa who appears on the ceiling, just in front of the *garbhagṛha*. Beginning with Badāmī Cave I, there are several temples in Aihole which house Ādiśeṣa. A good example is the Durgā temple. In the illustration Śeṣa appears in centre who is anthropomorphic but has the body of a snake, encircling himself. The human head is overshadowed by the hoods of the snake.The Lord is *dvibhuja* and holds *padmas* in both hands. Nandi is set at the entrance (Pl. XLIV).

Thr threshold of the Aralibasavanna temple is noted for its threshold, decorated with *dvārapālīkas*, elephants, *pūrṇakuṁbhas* and *nidhis* (Pl. XLII.1).

Another important point to be noted is that images of Sūrya (or Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa) appear in *garbhagṛhas* in two of the temples at Aihole. One is close to the Lad Khan and the other a little away from the Durgā temple on the way to the Guest House. Another temple to the right side of the Lad Khan houses an image at its *vimāna* section, facing the east. In all these representations the Lord is *sthānaka* in *samapāda* attitude. He is *dvibhuja* and holds *padmas* in both hands. The Lord is attended by miniature Devīs who represents Sāyā and Uṣā.

The Aihole Museum houses few images, reported by Jeyapriya Rajarajan (Pl. XX.1). A fine specimen of stray Nāga is found in the village (Pl. XLII.2).

Alampūr (Pl. I.1)

Moving from the Western Cāḷukyan Karṇāṭaka into the Eastern Cāḷukyan Āndhra

Pradesh one steps into Alampūr. The nine temples here are named after Brahmā, the *nava*-Brahmās. They are Garuḍa-, Bāla-, Kumāra-, Arka-, Vīra-, Svarga-, Padma-, Tāraka- and Viśva- Brahmā temples. Paradoxically enough, in none of the temples Brahmā occupies a notable place. No important icon is traceable *in situ* though few are lodged in the local site museum (e.g. Sūrya Pl. XXVII, XXVIII). It is to suggest that the temples could have derived their names late in their history. But it is in Alampūr that the *dikpālakas* take a definitive shape.

There are two specimens of Brahmā in the museum. Both are seated, one in *ardhapadmāsana* and the other *utkuṭikāsana*. Both are *trimukha* and *caturbhuja*, hold the usual emblems like *akṣamālā, kamaṇḍalū* and *puṣtaka* in the hands. The image in *utkuṭikāsana* is one of the rare on the subject. These images should have been housed in one of the Brahmā- temples of Alampūr. We still find a piece in the east wall section of the Bāla-Brahmā temple who is paired with Indra. Recently painted, the image of the Lord is *sthānaka* in *samapāda* attitude. He is *caturbhuja* and holds the front hands in *ūru* and *abhaya hastas*.

The *kṣerapālakas* (Pl. XXV.2-3) appearing in the Svarga-Brahmā temple are classical examples of the type. Standing in *tribhaṅga* posture all are uniformly *caturbhuja* and hold the emblems of Śiva rested on a *gadā*. One of the *parahastas* holds a *triśūla*, short or long. The other holds a *nāga* or *paraśu*. The legs are mostly crossed and add to the aesthetic quality.

The Svarga-Brahmā temple is noted for the *maithuna* motifs, which appear profusely in between the major iconographical themes illustrated.

The coiled Ādiśeṣa seems to have been a familiar motif, lodged in ceilings of the Alampūr temples. Though no such specimen is traceable *in situ*, a remarkable piece is present in the site museum, which is noted for its classical iconographical qualities.[7]

The Bāla-Brahmā and Svarga-Brahmā temples accommodate the *dikpālakas* in different sections of the *pāda* level (Pls. XXXII-XXXV). It is in agreement with one of the temples in the Rāmaliṅga *devasthānam* group in Aihole. Indra in the Bāla-Brahmā temple is found seated on the Airāvata in *pralambapāda* attitude. He is *dvibhuja* and holds the right in inviting attitude. The left is in *abhaya* pose. The Lord wears a *karaṇḍamakuṭa*, *makarakuṇḍalas*, necklaces, *yajñopavīta* and other ornaments. Indra in the Svarga-Brahmā temple is *sthānaka* in *samapāda* attitude. The elephant stands behind the Lord. He is *dvibhuja* and holds the *vajra* in right hand. He wears the usual ornaments, besides a *nāgamuri-keyūra* and the halo appearing behind the head. Yama (Pl. XXXII) appears on the right side of the temple. In one, he is seated on a buffalo. In another the buffalo is in prancing attitude while in the other walking. The animal is in profile while the Lord seated frontally. He carries in both cases a staff-like club or *khaḍga*. He wears a tall headgear, *uttarīya* and other ornaments. Atop an individual appears who in one of the illustrations holds a book and is perhaps is Chitragupta, Yama's bookkeeper. Nirṛtti appears in the southwest quarter as seated on a man. The *naravāhana* is *sthānaka* in *samapāda, dvibhuja* with both hands rested on hip as though in *kaṭihasta*. Nirṛtti is seated in *pralambapāda* attitude. He wears a flat cap-like headgear. He holds a staff. In one illustration he appears without his vehicle and holds a *dhvaja* in the right hand while the left is in *ūruhasta*. There is a divinity who appears amidst a forest of *agni* 'fire' who is *samapāda-* and *sthānaka-* and *dvibhuja*. He holds a *kamaṇḍalū*, hanging from the left hand. The headgear is in the shape of a burning mass and so he is likely to be Agni.[8]

Sūrya appears in one of the niches of the Svarga-Brahmā temple (Pl. XXXI.2). The Lord is standing in *samapāda* and *dvibhuja*. He holds *padmas* in both arms and is decorated with all kinds of ornaments. The Alampūr museum houses a number of Sūrya images, all of the same type. In one the Lord is standing on a chariot, pulled by horses that a driver conducts as seated on the car. The chariot is provided with a wheel consisting of eight spokes. The Lord is attended by a woman on the left side and two men on the right side.

The Garuḍa-Brahmā temple in its ceiling to the front of the *garbhagṛha* houses an image of Ādiśeṣa in his coiled aspect, the type which is popular with the temples of Aihole. Among others are several *sṛṅgāra* motifs (Pl. XL).

Moghulrājapuram

The Akkaṇṇa-Madaṇṇa caves of Vijayavāḍa and the first two caves of Moghulrājapuram are tricellar and likely to have been dedicated to the Trimūrtis. Cave IV in Moghulrājapuram consists of a small adjunct to the main cave in which the images of Trimūrtis appear. Besides, there is another cave which is also tricellar in organisation.[9]

Most of the caves (totally 5) being tricellar, it is quite evident that the Trimūrti cult had a strong base in the lower Kṛṣṇā valley. Though all three cellae in almost all the caves are empty, there are two important clues to confirm their dedication with the Trimūrtis. Cave IV that is dedicated to Devī to its right consists of a miniature of the cave in which a Liṅga is housed in the middle cella. To the left Viṣṇu appears in *sthānaka* attitude while the right is dedicated to Brahmā who is also *sthānaka* in *samapāda* attitude. He is *caturbhuja* and holds the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū* in *parahastas*. The front left is in *ūruhasta* and the right suspended below. The kind of iconographic programme is an improved version of the type of Trimūrtis, noted in the caves of Ellora (Laṅkeśvara and XXVII) and Tiruciráppaḷḷi (lower cave). What is unique is that instead of an anthropomorphic figure of Śiva the aniconic Liṅga appears in Moghulrājapuram. Nevertheless, the tradition falls in line with the caves of Bhairavakoṇḍa and Tirukkaḻukkuṉṟam. In both the later cases, the cellae are occupied by the Liṅga while Brahmā and Viṣṇu appear on the back walls of the *maṇḍapa*.

Another important clue to the Trimūrti orientation of the tricellar caves is provided by cave II of Moghulrājapuram. In this case, the cellae are empty but at the *prastara* level three *kūḍus*, falling axially in alignment with the womb houses appear. The first, starting from the left, consists of a *trimukha* bust who obviously represents Brahmā. The heads, decked with *jaṭāmakuṭas*, represent the polycephalous Brahmā. The middle cella is for Śiva whose head with that of Devī appears in the *kūḍu* and above the *prastara* Śiva appears doing *ūrdhvajānu* to confirm the dedication of the middle cella to Śiva. To his left, the third *kūḍu* (to the right side of one who stands facing the cave) enshrines the heads of a male and female, obviously Viṣṇu and his consort. These three bust representations are solid evidences to point out the dedication of the cellae to the Trimūrtis. The type of bust representation, next only to the Trimūrti busts of Elephanta and Ellora, is the only one of its type. They are frozen symbols to decode the mysteries behind the empty tricellar caves found in different parts of South India during the period under study. The Maṇṭagappaṭṭu inscription provides[10] epigraphical clues to unravel the mysteries but Cave II Moghulrājapuram is unique in its own way. The type of bust representation of the Trimūrtis may also serve to point out the fact that the Elephanta and Ellora busts stand for the Trimūrti as it has been repeatedly pointed out.

Bhairavakoṇḍa (Pl. IV.1, V)

The nine and odd caves of Bhairavakoṇḍa are simply marvellous within the sphere of early medieval art from the point of iconographic programme. Each and every cave is occupied by the Liṅga which consists of three sections; representing Brahmā (so Brahmabhāga, the square base), Viṣṇu (so Viṣṇubhāga, the octagonal middle section) and Śiva (so Śivabhāga, the circular top section). The type of programme in respect of a Linga is attested by later day *śilpaśāstras* like the *Kāśyapīya* and *Mayamata*. That is to confirm the Liṅga is basically a symbol of the united Trinity.[11]

Another unique nature of the caves is that six out of nine house images of Brahmā and Viṣṇu on the back walls of the *maṇḍapa* (Pl. XX.2) and thus oriented towards the Liṅga (Śiva) appearing in the cella. They are caves I, II, III, IV, VIII and IX. In all these cases Brahmā appears to the right of the Liṅga. He is *sthānaka* in all and *samapāda*. He is *caturbhuja* and holds the usual emblems (*akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū*) in *parahastas*. The front right is in *ūru* attitude and the left *abhaya*.

The Trimūrti orientation of the caves acquires a definitive shape through the kind of representation of the Trimūrtis whose link with the Liṅga-Trimūrti is symbolically pointed out. Besides, there are two more evidences in Bhairavakoṇḍa to confirm the thesis. In cave VI there is an inscription which speaks of *Śrī Brahmīśvara Viṣṇu*[12] in a style similar to the Maṇṭakappaṭṭu inscription, which speaks of the dedication of the cave temple to 'Brahm-E-īśvara Viṣṇu'. The link with the Elephanta type of Trimūrti is also confirmed by the presence of an icon of the type, housed in the cella of Cave V of Bhairavakoṇḍa. Though a dull replica of the originals found in the Ellora caves, set within the framework of the *garbhagṛha*, the Brahmā face is as usual profile and holds a *darpaṇa* in the hand. Images of Caṇḍikeśvara and Nandi (Pl. VI.1) are redundant.

CONSOLIDATION

The iconographical variables present in the Lower Deccan include Brahmā in seated and standing aspects, and the Lord who appears as part of Trimūrti, Trimūrtis and a rare instance of Liṅgodbhavamūrti. The *dikpālakas* form part of Śaiva themes and get represented at the *pāda* level of few of the temples in Alampūr and Aihole. Rare instances of separated *dikpālakas* like Indra and Varuṇa appear in Aihole. Among the minor deities are *Kṣetrapālakas, Garuḍa,* Ādiśeṣa in coiled aspect, *Nāga-Nāginī,* Bhṛṅgi, Nandi, the *nidhis* (*Śaṅkha* and *Padma*), *Vidyādharas, Apsarase, Surasundarīs, Yakṣa-yakṣīs* and *maithuna* motifs. Sūrya is present in few of the temples.

Brahmā mostly appears independently. From out of a total of 20 images 15 (75%) are independent. The total number of Brahmā images are 20 (50%) from out of a total of 40. Unlike in the Upper Deccan, the Lord attains an independent status here. He forms part of the Trimūrti of Bhairavakoṇḍa and Trimūrtis. Few of the tricellar caves seem to have a dedicated house for him as proved in case of Moghulrājapuram II.

The Lord is either seated or standing. He is *trimukha* and *caturbhuja*. He is seated on *haṁsapīṭha* or *padmapīṭha*. The seated posture for the Lord is of different types like *ardhapadmāsana, pralambapāda* (Hucchapayya-*guḍi*) and *sukhāsana* (Kont-*guḍi*, Aihole). The emblems are the usual *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū*, others being *puṣtaka, padma* and *mudrās* like *kaṭaka, dhyāna, cin, ūru* and one rested on thigh. The dress in the Hucchapayya-*guḍi* at Aihole consists of the deer motif. The Lord is attended by *ṛṣis* (Paṭṭadakkal and Aihole).

Among the various specimens, those appearing in the Badāmī caves and the Aihole temples (Hucchapayya and Kont) are masterpieces on the subject. The location is important because the Lord appears mostly on ceilings. In the Aihole temples he is associated with the other members of the Trinity like Śiva and Viṣṇu. In the Kont-*guḍi*, Śeṣaśāyī is linked with Brahmā. All these are further evidences to prove the Trimūrti orientation of early medieval temples.

The only evidence of Trimūrti bust is from Bhairavakoṇḍa in which Brahmabhāga forms part of the left side. The Lord holds a *darpaṇa* in hand.

There are evidences of not less than six Trimūrtis. There is a miniature in Badāmī cave II, others being Bhūtanātha group at Badāmī, a miniature in Cave III of Moghulrājapuram, stray piece at Mahākūṭa, and three in Aihole, appearing on the ceiling. Among them the Aihole specimens are simply unique from the thematic point of view and their placement within the temple format.

The *dikpālakas* acquire a new shape in Lower Deccan, especially Aihole and Alampūr. They are found on ceiling panels at Badāmī and Aihole (Kont-*guḍi*), encircling Brahmā. Similar panels appear in Paṭṭadakkal in which case the *dikpālakas* are associated with Somāskandamūrti and Umāsahitamūrti. In these panels an oblong plate is divided into ten square boxes of which the centre is occupied by the main Mūrti and the others by the guardians of the different regions. In few rare instances the Regents also form part of Śaiva themes. The miniature of Liṅgodbhavamūrti in the Kāśi-Viśvanātha temple at Paṭṭadakkal is a good example. Yama, Varuṇa, Agni and Indra appear. Similarly, the Naṭarāja in Hucchapayya-*guḍi* includes Yama and Agni.

What is unique in Aihole and Alampūr is that the *dikpālakas* appear at the *pāda* level of few temples and occupy the directions meant for them. In the Kailāsa at Ellora, they appear in a straight line and a disorderly manner whereas the three temples in Lower Deccan assign for them the concerned regions. Herein the prototype of the later medieval representations, appearing in South Indian *gopurams* and other parts of temples, are to be found.

The list of minor deities include the following: *Kṣetrapālakas*, Nandi, *Garuḍa*, *Nāga-Nāginī*, coiled Ādiśeṣa, Bhṛṅgi, *Śaṅkha* and *Padma -nidhis*, *vidyādharas*, *maithuna* motifs and Sūrya. Sūrya is found in the Virūpākṣa temple at Paṭṭadakkal on the ceiling in a pattern that he appears in Ellora. In two instances he is housed in *garbhagṛhas* and in one atop the *vimāna* section of a *rekha-nāgara* temple at Aihole. In all cases the Lord is *samapādasthānaka* and *dvibhuja*, holding *padmas* in both hands.

Nandi appearing in a special pavilion is typical of Paṭṭadakkal in the Lower Deccan. In many cases the *maṇḍapas* are dilapidated but one is intact in front of the Virūpākṣa temple. Besides, the zoomorphic *nandi* forms part of Śaivite themes like Ardhanārīśvara (e.g. Cave I, Badāmī). A theriomorphic Nandi appears in connection with Harihara in Cave I Badāmī which theme also includes *Garuḍa*. In several of the Aihole and Paṭṭadakkal temples, *Garuḍa* appears at the doorframe, leading to the *garbhagṛha*, holding *nāga* which go around the entire section of the *dvāra*. Similarly, the coiled Ādiśeṣa is to be found on the ceiling in front of the main *dvāra* to the temples.

Nāgas and *Nāginīs* are associated with Bhūvarāhamūrti. Ādiśeṣa provides the couch for Ādinātha in Cave III Badāmī, which is one of the most outstanding representations on the subject. He forms part of Śeṣaśāyī, good examples being the Kont-*guḍi* at Aihole and the Bhūtanātha group (stray piece) at Badāmī. Lord Raṅganātha is found reclining on the bed provided by the eternal snake.

Bhṛṅgi is associated with Ardhanārīśvara, a good example being Cave I at Badāmī. Kṣetrapālakas attain a new iconographical status, being provided with four arms. The best illustrations are from the structural temples of Alampūr and Cave I Badāmī. *Śaṅkha* and *Padma nidhis* appear as a pair in the Rāvulaphaḍi cave at Aihole, the Virūpākṣa temple of Paṭṭadakkal and the Huccapayya-*guḍi* at Aihole. *Vidyādharas*, *apsarase* and *surasundarīs* are common motifs. *Yakṣas* and *Yakṣīs* appear in erotic postures in several of the Aihole temples, best examples being the Hucchapayya-*guḍi* and Durgā temple. In Badāmī Cave III Śiva and Viṣṇu appear with their Devīs, engaged in erotic dalliances. It is the first of its kind in early medieval art. The Tantric roots of South Indian art are to be traced to the traditions, recorded in the temples of Ellora (XXI) and Badāmī (III).

TABLE II
DISTRIBUTION OF ICONOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES: LOWER DECCAN

Iconographical variables	Distribution pattern: placewise							
	Bad.	Mah.	Pat.	Aih.	Alam.	Mog.	Bhai.	Total
Brahmā:				*				
Seated	2	-	1	4	2	-	-	9
Standing	1	1	1	-	-	-	6	9
Trimūrti	-	-	-	**	-	1	-	1
Somāskanda	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Dikpālakas:								
p/o other themes	-	3	2	-	-	-	5	
independent	1	-	-	1	2	-	-	4
Indra	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Śaṅkha and Padma-nidhi	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	3
Sūrya	-	-	1	3	3	-	-	7
Total	4	1	8	13	7	1	6	40

* A bust as part of *kūḍu* motif appears.

** Two of the seated Brahmās actually fall within the frame of Trimūrtis.

Abbreviations:	Bad.	Badāmī	Mah.	Mahākūṭa
	Pat.	Paṭṭadakkal	Aih.	Aihole
	Alam.	Alampūr	Mog.	Moghulrājapuram
	Bhai.	Bhairavakoṇḍa		

REFERENCES

1. K.V. Soundararajan, *Cave Temples of the Deccan*, p. 56, pl. VIIIB.
2. The *nidhis* appear in few of the pre-Rāṣṭrakūṭa caves in Ellora, examples being XX and XXV. The Paṭṭadakkal artists are likely to have borrowed the idiom from the Upper Deccan which returned back through the Rāṣṭrakūṭas who fashioned the Kailāsa on the models set by Paṭṭadakkal and Kāñci.
3. For more details about the miniatures see Raju Kalidos, "A Rare Miniature of Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti", *Annali AION*, 1991; K. Kandan, "Kiratārjuniyam in Early Indian Art", *Annali AION*, 1991; T.S. Thangamuthu, "A Rare Miniature from Paṭṭadakkal", *East and West*. The article by T.S. Thangamuthu examines the significance of horses in sexual union

which motifs appears in the *tripaṭṭakumuda* section of the plinth in the Kāśi-Viśvanātha temple. It is likely to be the theme pertaining to the sexual union of Sūrya with his wife, Sajña, both disguised as horses (Pl. XLI.2).

4. Aschwin Lippe, "Some Sculptural Motifs on Early Chāḷukya Temples", *Artibus Asiae*, XXIX, 1967, pp. 5-8.
5. Ṛṣabhavāhanamūrti in the Durgā temple at Aihole wears a similar type of lion cloth with the tiger's head appearing on the garment. The Nara-Nārāyaṇa of the Deogad temple also has a similar representation.
6. The Tantric orientation of the caves has been pointed out in another article by the author, see Raju Kalidos, "Yoninilayā: Concept and Application in South Indian Art", *East and West*, Vol. 40.
7. Raju Kalidos, *op. cit.*, fig. 34.
8. George Michell, "The Regents of the Directions of space: A set of Sculptural Panels from Alampūr", *Art and Archaeology Research Papers*, Vol. 4, 1973, pp. 81 ff; For a study of the Ellora specimen see M.B. Heston, "Iconographic themes of the *gopura* of the Kailāsanātha temple at Ellora", *Artibus Asiae*, XLIII, 1981, pp. 219-35; For a study of the Badāmī cave temples and their *dikpālakas* see Gary Tarr, "Chronology and Development of the Chāḷukya Cave Temples", *Ars Orientalis*, VIII, 1970, pp. 167.
9. For a detailed examination of the Trimūrti orientation in temples of Āndhradeśa see Raju Kalidos, "Trimūrti Orientation of the South Indian Temples with special reference to the Kākatiyas", Paper presented in the Seminar on Kākatiya Art, Telugu University, Srisailam 1991.
10. K.R. Srinivasan, *Cave Temples of the Pallavas*, p. 47.
11. Raju Kalidos, "Iconographic Programme in the Cave Temples of South India", Paper presented in the International Seminar, University of Hong Kong 1991.
12. K.V. Soundararajan, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

CHAPTER IV

Iconographical Survey: Far South

In Tamil Nadu and Kerala the minor deities and Brahmā are not that popular. In the Tirucirāppaḷḷi lower cave Brahmā receives an important treatment, which is simply unique within the purview of the period under study. He is assigned an important place in the cave temples of Māmallapuram (Mahāvarāha-Viṣṇu-*gṛha*) and Tirumalaipuram in addition to the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñci. The *Dikpālakas* fail to receive any significant treatment when compared with Ellora, Badāmī, Aihole and Alampūr. The point has to be emphasised because in Tamil Tradition of the yester saga (i.e., the Caṅkam age) two of the directional deities are associated with gods of the lands. They are Vēntaṉ (Indra) and Varuṇaṉ (Varuṇa), said to be Lords of the *marutam* (plains and agricultural fields) and *neytal* (littoral regions). While other gods of the other *tiṇais* (landed divisions of the country) like Murukaṉ (*kuṟiñci* 'hill country'), Māyōn 'Viṣṇu' (*mullai* 'forest enclave') and Koṟṟavai (*pālai* 'desert tract') receive a fair degree of treatment, it is indeed enigmatic to note the mean status accorded to Varuṇa and Indra in the arts. Indra appears only in one place and that is the Arjuna-*ratha* at Māmallapuram. Quantitatively speaking, the Far South stands far behind the Deccani tradition.

MĀMALLAPURAM

The Parameśvara-Mahāvarāha-Viṣṇu-*gṛha* and Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa* are of prime importance for the iconography of Brahmā.

The Mahāvarāha-Viṣṇu-*gṛha* is an oblong cave temple with a cella for seated Varāhamūrti on its back wall. The cave is decorated with a number of iconographical themes in all three sides of its wall section, excepting the front, which faces the west. Brahmā appears on the left wall and Gaṅgādhara on the right wall. All these personalities, viz., Varāhamūrti, Gaṅgādhara and Brahmā fall within a triangular framework, the Lord Boar occupying the apex. The type of arrangement is in tune with the cave temples of Ellora (Nos. XV, XVII and XXV). The cave offers another clue to fix the Trimūrti orientation of the early medieval temples wherein Brahmā receives a tertiary treatment, having been placed to the left, the primary and secondary gods being Varāhamūrti and Gaṅgādhara respectively.

Brahmā is *samapāda-sthānaka* (Pl. XXI.1), the Lord being endowed with four hands. He is *trimukha*, the frontal being prominently carved with the lateral ones insignificantly placed into a low depression. The back two hands bear the *akṣamālā* and *padma*. The front left hand is in *abhayamudrā* and the right *ūruhasta*. The Lord wears a *karaṇḍa* (*jaṭā*) *makuṭa*, a lengthy loin cloth, *uttarīya* and a single stranded *mālā*.

The Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa* is another marvel of the age. The cave consists of three separate *garbhagṛhas* with no *maṇḍapa* adjunct but has carvings of *vimānas* atop the rocky projection. The type of *vimāma* carving is typical of Pallava art as we find them on several other caves in Māmallapuram (e.g. Varāha-*maṇḍapa*, Pañca-Pāṇḍava-*maṇḍapa*) and also Dalavāṇūr wherein *kūḍu* motifs with human heads inside as in Moghulrājapuram Cave II appear.[1] It may be noted here that the upper cave in the Akkaṇṇa-Madaṇṇa group at Vijayavāḍa also consists of a carved *vimāna*, brought to light recently.[2] Now, the Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa* is a cluster of temples, dedicated to the Hindu Trinity, Śiva occupying the central cella, Viṣṇu the left and Brahmā the right. It is the cave temple in the entire range of early medieval art to provide iconographical clues with images being carved on the back wall of the rocky house to prove the dedication of the tricellar caves to the Trinity. Next in importance is the Cave II of Moghulrājapuram. Maṇṭagappaṭṭu and Bhairavakoṇḍa provide epigraphical data.

The image of Brahmā (Pl. XXII.1), appearing in the right cella of the Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa*, is of an enigmatic character. K.R. Srinivasan calls the Lord Brahmā[3] while others like Jouveau Dubreuil and C. Sivaramamurti designate him Subrāhmanya and Brahmasāsta respectively. It is because of the iconographical peculiarities and perhaps Sivaramamurti's epithet is in the right spirit. The association of the deity with Brahmā could not be ruled out, spoken with due reference to the tricellar pattern of the cave. Again the *dvārapālakas* are *ṛṣis* whose visible traits and association with the Lord of Ascetics has been proved with the imagery of Brahmā in the Hucchapayya-*guḍi* at Aihole. The Lord stands in *samapāda* attitude and is *caturbhuja*. He is unicephalous, perhaps the only image of Brahmā to be in this character. He holds the *padma* and *akṣamālā* in *parahastas* as in the Mahāvarāha-Viṣṇu-*gṛha*. He wears a *cannavīra* which consists of *rudrākṣa* beads. K.R. Srinivasan says it is in the *nivīta-yajñopavīta* fashion. The Lord is attended by two floating *gaṇas* who appear atop the relief on either side. They hold one of their hands in adoration attitude and the other holding an illegible object. The Lord is also attended by two seated figures on both sides who are adorned with *jaṭāmakuṭas* and *uttarīyas*. The *dvārapālakas* wear the same and one of them holds the *sruk* in a hand. All these emblems of the anchorite would prove beyond doubt that the main character of the Lord is that of Brahmā who gets mixed up with the qualities of Skanda, the warrior-god, whose ensign, the *cannavīra*, he appropriates. The image with a single head is called Brahmasāsta, the Lord Skanda who punished Brahmā for not knowing the meaning of *praṇavamantra*.[4] Iconographically speaking, it is one of the marvels of the age.

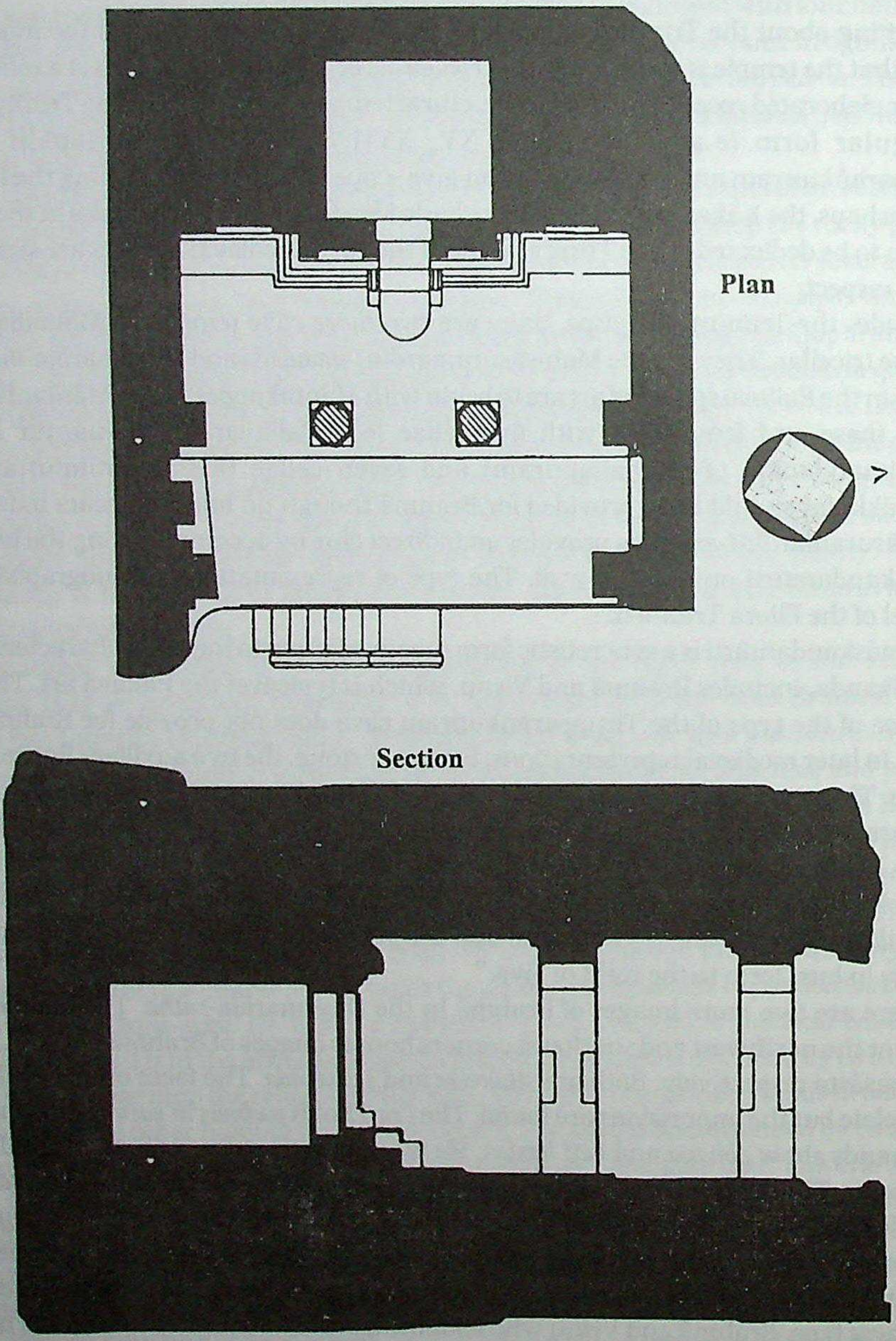
Writing about the Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa*, K.R. Srinivasan has proposed the interesting thesis that the temple is of the *trikūṭa* or *trikūṭācala* or *vimānatraya* type. It is a solid point, further elaborated recently.[5] Cave or structural temples, providing for the Trinity, in the triangular form (e.g. Ellora caves XV, XVII & XXV, Tiruchirāppaḷḷi lower, Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam and Tirumalaipuram give scope for further confirming the hypothesis. Perhaps, the Kākatiyas borrowed the basic idea to design their temples in the *trikūṭa* pattern to be dedicated to the Trinity. Some of the early medieval temples are significant in this respect.

Besides the Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa*, there are two more cave temples in Māmallapuram that are tricellar. They are the Mahiṣāsuramardinī-*maṇḍapa* and Dharmarāja-*maṇḍapa*. Others in the Pallava sphere of art are to begin with Maṇṭakappaṭṭu and Māmaṇṭūr Cave II. All these and few others with five cellae (e.g. Pallāvaram, Māmaṇṭur III and Koṇērimaṇḍapam of Māmallapuram) and seven cellae (Kuraṅkaṇilmuṭṭam and Viḷappākkam) should have provided for Brahmā though no image appears today. The Mahiṣāsuramardinī-*maṇḍapa* provides an indirect clue by accommodating the image of Somāskandamūrti on its back wall. The type of representation is iconographically a parallel of the Ellora Trimūrti.

Somāskandamūrti is a syncretistic form that in addition to the main characters, Śiva-Umā-Skanda, includes Brahmā and Viṣṇu, which is typical of the Pallava art. The only instance of the type of the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam cave does not provide for Brahmā and Viṣṇu. In later medieval representations, bronze or stone, the two auxiliary figures fail to appear. There are not less than eight images of Somāskandamūrti in Māmallapuram. They are found in the cellae of Dharmarāja-*ratha* (*vimāna* section), Shore temple (two cellae), Mukunda Nāyaṉār temple, and Atiranachaṇḍa-*maṇḍapa* (one in cella and two on the back wall of the cave). In all these cases, Brahmā is *trimukha, caturbhuja*, holding the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū* in *parahastas*, and the *pūrvahastas* paying homage to Śiva. He appears in bust form to the right of Śiva.[6]

There are two more images of Brahmā in the Dharmarāja-*ratha*. The temple in its *āditaḷa* at the northwest and southeast corners houses images of Brahmā (Pl. XXI.2) and Brahmasāsta respectively. Both are *sthānaka* and *samapāda*. The faces on the profile are incomplete but the impressions are found. The Lord holds *padmas* in *parahastas* while the front hands show *abhaya* and *kaṭi hastas*. He wears a *kaṭibandha, yajñopavita* and other ornaments. The image of Brahmasāsta wears a tight garment, which looks like a *kaupīṇa*. He holds the *akṣamālā* and *padma* in *parahastas*. The *pūrvahastas* are in *abhaya* and *kaṭyavalaṁbita* poses. The Lord wears the *udarabandha, uttarīya* and other ornaments.

The image of Somāskanda appearing on the *vimāna* section of the Dharmarāja-*ratha* is of a new type. Brahmā and Viṣṇu who usually appear in bust form behind the head of Śiva are found in separate niches, attending on Somāskanda, as they do in the Bhairavakoṇḍa caves. Brahmā in this case is standing in *tribhaṅga* attitude. He is *caturbhuja*


Plan
Section

2. Plan, Cave temple, Tirukkaḻukkuṉṟam

and holds the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū* in back hands. The front hands are in the attitude of extolling the Lord housed in the cella.

The Dharmarāja-*ratha* in the third *taḷa* of the *vimāna* houses images of Sūrya and Candra. Both are standing *samapāda* images. Both *dvibhuja*, they hold a flower in the right hand and the left is in *ūruhasta*. Both wear all kinds of ornaments.

The Varāhamūrti panel in the same cave includes *nāgas* and *nāginīs*. The Lord has his raised foot placed on the head of Nāgarāja in marked contrast to the Deccani tradition wherein the foot is placed on the coils.

The Arjuna-*ratha* is an important monument that provides for Indra in the central back *koṣṭha* of the monolith. It is our only evidence of Indra or as for the matter one of the *dikpālakas* appearing in Pallava art. The temple faces west while Indra as seated on the Airāvata faces east and is accorded a place in the region meant for him. The Lord is *dvibhuja* and has the right hand just lifted above in *kaṭakamudrā* attitude. He wears a cap-like headgear, typical of early medieval Tamil art. The elephant is the main character in the carving who occupies one third of the panel in its vertical order and is in frontal position, comparable to the *haṁsa* of Brahmā in the Hucchapayya-*guḍi* at Aihole.

The cave and structural temples of Māmallapuram provide for *dvārapālakas*. The caves usually at the either extremity of the *façade* house them. The cellae at their doorstep have the *dvārapālakas* stationed. A good example is the Koṇērimaṇḍapam wherein all the five cellae are flanked by a row of gracefully posing doorkeepers. Another good example is the Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa*. A variety of images are found within the Pallava zone. They are uniformly *dvibhuja* and *tribhaṅga* in stance. They appear in the attitude of adoration with a hand lifted above in *vismaya* posture (e.g. Dalavāṉūr, Tirukkaḻukkuṉṟam and Kīḻmāvilaṅkai). They are at times horned (e.g. Kuraṅkaṇilmuṭṭam) and hold heavy clubs upon which they majestically lean (e.g. Maṇṭakappaṭṭu, Tirucirāppaḷḷi upper and Cīyamaṅkalam). Sages appear as doorkeepers in the Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa* (Māmallapuram) and Māmaṇṭūr II. Interesting enough, they are found engaged in martial games, wielding swords, in the Cīyamaṅkalam cave. *Dvārapālikas* (Pls. L-LII) appear in the Koṭikāḷ-*maṇḍapa* and Draupadī-*ratha* of Māmallapuram. The same appear in the Pirāṉmalai cave temple, deep in the south within the Pāṇḍyan sphere of art. The *dvārapālakas* are usually of the height of a normal human being and add a new dimension.

Portraits of Pallava emperors appear in few caves (Pl. LIV).

TIRUKKAḺUKKUṈṞAM

The *garbhagṛha* houses a Liṅga that is guarded by *dvārapālakas* at the doorstep. Images of Brahmā and Viṣṇu appear on the back wall in a pattern, noted in the Bhairavakoṇḍa caves. Tirukkaḻukkuṉṟam being the earliest in point of time, the type of iconographic programme is sure to have influenced the Bhairavakoṇḍa artists. Brahmā is *trimukha* as usual and *caturbhuja*. Interesting enough, he is *tribhaṅga* in stance that adds a certain amount of grace to the composition. He holds the *kamaṇḍalū* and *akṣamālā* in *parahastas*. The front right hand is in *kaṭihasta* and left holds a *padma*. The Lords wears a *jaṭāmakuṭa*, *uttarīya*, and *makarakuṇḍalas*. The structural temple includes Brahmā (Pl. XXII.2).

KĀÑCĪPURAM

Excepting the Kailāsanātha, none of the temples in Kāñcīpuram house any interesting image of Brahmā. The Vaikuṇṭha Perumāḷ temple includes Brahmā in few of the themes related to Viṣṇu's *anugraha* forms.

Most striking among the specimens in the Kailāsanātha is found in a special niche on the right side of the Mahēndravarmeśvara square of the temple. The corresponding left niche houses the image of Viṣṇu. The programme in the part is akin to what is already noted in Caves XV, XVII and XXV of Ellora. Moreover, the *trikūṭa* type of cave temples in Tamil Nadu are of the same pattern. That is to say the Kailāsanātha has appropriated an idea already in practice. It is a good case to establish the tradition relating to such a way of representation because in the caves of Ellora the niches alone are found with no iconoic material. In this regard the Kailāsanātha of Kāñci is the spokesman of a defunct tradition that could be authentically proved.

The Lord, Brahmā, is found in the niche seated in *sukhāsana* attitude (Pl. XXIII.2). He is attended by two of his Devīs, seated by his side. They may represent Sāvitrī and Gāyatrī. The Lord is *caturbhuja*, holding the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū* in *parahastas*. The front right is in *kaṭakamudrā* attitude and the left placed on lap in *dhyānamudrā* posture. Devīs are seated partly in *mahārājalīlāsana* attitude. Both are *dvibhuja* and have one of the hands rested on the pedestal.

The Ūrdhvatāṇḍavamūrti panel appearing on the back wall of the main temple includes a number of attendant gods, including Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Gaṇapati. Brahmā is standing. He bears the usual emblems, the front two hands being held in the attitude of adoration. In the Ellora representation of Ūrdhvatāṇḍavmūrti, the image is juxtaposed by *sthānaka*-Brahmā.

The *devakuḷikas* inside the main temple consist of a number of Śaivite illustrations in few of which Brahmā appears as warranted by the thematic content of the motifs. He is found driving Tripurāntaka's chariot. In another remarkable illustration he is found as though engaged in dual with Śiva. The subject relates to Brahmaśirascchedakamūrti. According to the myth, Śiva is said to have cut the fifth head of Brahmā to curb his pride. The illustration is perhaps the only one of its type, relating to the myth of Brahmā. The texts on iconography usually bring Brahmaśirascchedakamūrti under Śiva, the hero being the latter. In the illustration Brahmā is seated below while Śiva makes an attempt to severe his head. Brahmā is *caturbhuja* and holds the usual emblems in back hands. Both iconographically and stylistically, it is one of the most outstanding on the subject. The thematic novelty involves not only the confrontation between Śiva and Brahmā but also

Viṣṇu who as a mediator between the two makes an attempt to stop the belligerency of the Lord of Destruction. There is a merger of the Trinity in the motif. It may suggest the basic truth that the Trinity not only conjoin their personalities into an entity (e.g. the Elephanta type of Trimūrti and the Tiruciräppaḷḷi type of Trimūrtis) but break away from one another under certain compelling circumstances.

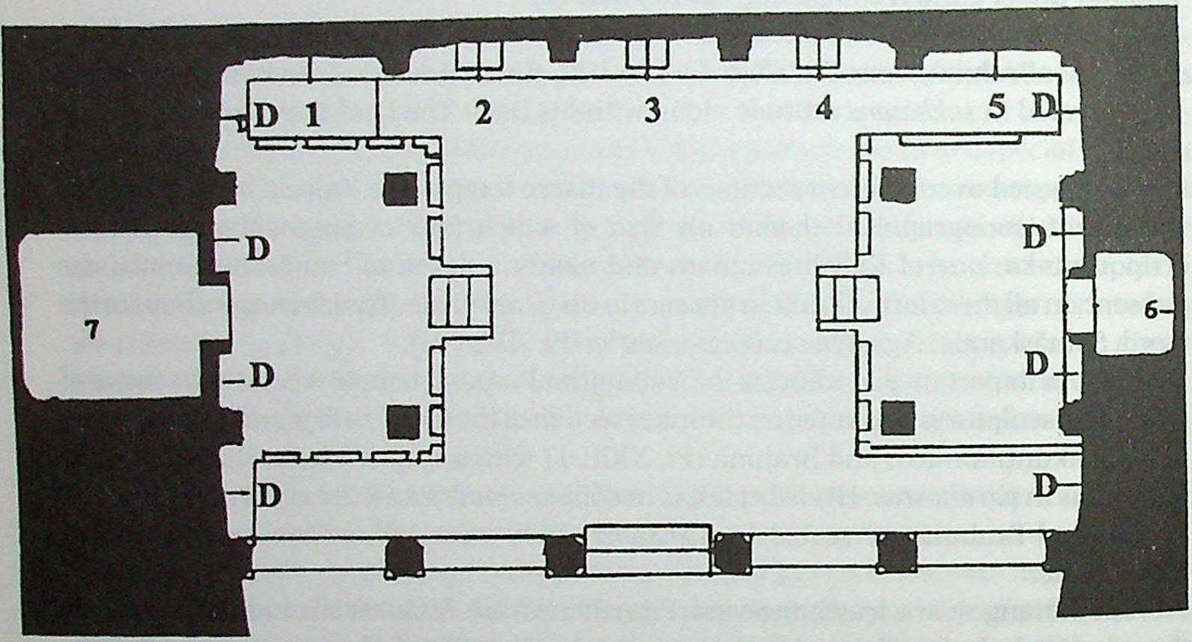
The *devakuḷikas* found on the south wall of the main temples within the Rājasiṁheśvara provide for Brahmā in one (Pl. XXIV.1). The 20th shrine is dedicated to Brahmā, the Lord being seated in *sukhāsana* attitude along with his Devī. The Lord is attended by a male figure.

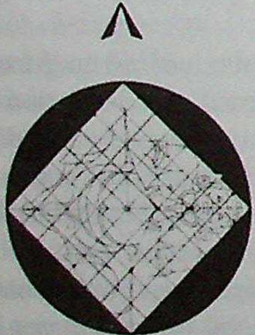
Distributed over different sections of the macro temple, the Kailāsa includes a wide variety of iconographical themes on Śiva of which four of Liṅgodbhava, three of Tripurāntaka, one of Kalyāṇasundara and nearly a dozen of Somāskandamūrti are present. In all these forms Brahmā appears in his usual mode. The *garbhagṛha* houses the Lord, Somāskanda. Agastya occupies a *koṣṭha* (Pl. XXXVIII).

Next in importance in Kāñci is the Vaikuṇṭha Perumāḷ temple wherein the series of historical sculptures, mounted on the inner section of the temple's first *prākāra* wall, start with Vaikuṇṭhamūrti, and Brahmā (Pl. XXIII.1) who is *caturbhuja*, holding the usual emblems in *parahastas*. His front left is in *dhāyanamudrā* and the right *abhaya*. Both Viṣṇu and Brahmā are seated in *sukhāsana*. They wear tall *makuṭas* and the usual ornaments.

The Mātaṅgeśvara, Iṟavātaneśvara, Piṟavātaneśvara, Mukteśvara and Airāvateśvara temples include Somāskandamūrti on the back walls of the *sanctum sanctorum*. Tripurāntakamūrti in the Airāvateśvara temple includes Brahmā who appears with hands folded in *añjalibandha* instead of being the charioteer. The right wall of the temple includes a *koṣṭha* in which Brahmā appears.

Cave temples of the Pallavas though distributed over a vast stretch of territory from Mahēntravāṭi in the north to Tiruccirāppaḷḷi in south, no significant representation of Brahmā or the minor deities is to be found. In some of the later Pallava structural temples at Takkōlam (Jalanadīśvara), Tiruttaṇi (Vīraṭṭaneśvara) and Tirukkaḻukkuṉṟam (Vedagirīśvara) images of the seated Brahmā appear on the north *koṣṭha* (Pl. XXII.2). In all these cases the temples are compact and consist of three *devakoṣṭhas*, facing the directions other than the east. Dakṣiṇāmūrti (south), seated Viṣṇu (west) and seated Brahmā (north) appear in them. The *koṣṭhas* at the *antarāḷa* level house images of Gaṇapati (south) and Mahiṣāsuramardinī (north). The stereotyped pattern is repeated in few of the early Cōḻa temples and later other iconographs replace the older ones. For example Liṅgodbhavamūrti and Ardhanārīśvara appear in the west *koṣṭha*. Brahmā in the later Pallava structural temples at Takkōlam, Tiruttaṇi and Tirukkaḻukkuṉṟam is of the uniform pattern, seated in *sukhāsana* attitude, *caturbhuja* and holding the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū* in *parahastas*.





1. Gaṇapati
2.Śiva
3. Brahmā
4. Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa
5. Durgādevī
6. Sthānka Viṣṇu
7. House of Śiva
D. *Dvārapālaka*

3. Plan, Lower Cave, Tirucci

TIRUCCIRĀPPAḶḶI

The Tiruccirāppaḷḷi upper cave is of Pallava origin and provides for a cella in the lateral side, the other example being the Talavāṉūr cave. Usually cellae on lateral sides appear in the Pāṇḍyan caves, good example being the Tirucci lower cave, facing the east and west, dedicated to Śiva-Liṅga and *sthānaka*-Viṣṇu. The right side wall of the upper cave is occupied by an image of Gaṅgādharamūrti. The Lord has his left hand lifted, above which an image of zoomorphic *nandi* in miniature is carved. The symbolism behind the kind of representation may be to point out the pitch of sexual passion to which the Lord is sublimated as a result of the Gaṅgā descending on him.[7] Nandi in Śaivite tradition is both *dharma*-incarnate and an embodiment of sexual virility.[8]

The lower cave in Tirucci is very important for a study of the iconographic programme. The east facing cella is dedicated to Śiva in his aniconic form. The west facing cella houses an image of *sthānaka*-Viṣṇu. The back wall of the cave consists of five niches of which the middle is occupied by Brahmā (Pl. XXIV.2). To his right Śiva and Gaṇapati appear. To the left are Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa and Durgā. It is interesting to find all images in the cave in *sthānaka* aspect, including one in the cella.

Now, there are two ways of explaining the significance of the iconographic programme and the position of Brahmā in the Tirucci cave: (1) considering Brahmā as a *koṣṭha-devata*, (2) linking Brahmā with the deities, housed in the *garbhagṛha*. As a *koṣṭha-devata*, Brahmā takes the pivotal place, being centrally placed. If Gaṇapati and Durgā are excluded it is evident that the Trimūrtis appear on a level of *primus interpares* status. Among them Brahmā is great because he is the central Mūrti. It is in marked contrast to what we have already noted in the Laṅkeśvara (Śiva as central Mūrti) and Milk Maids cave (Viṣṇu as central Mūrti) of Ellora. It might suggest that there were several sectarian groups to assign the primary-God status to any of the gods of the Trinity. In Tirucci a sectarian group assigning importance to Brahmā is likely to have existed in those times. Taking the images in *garbhagṛha* into account, we may suggest that the five niches, two to the west of Brahmā is related to the god housed in the western cella. The two niches to the east of Brahmā are related to the Lord housed in the eastern cella. Now, Brahmā stands separated. That is to say he is independent. Even though he is not housed in any cella, the *koṣṭha* that he occupies itself is supposed to be his womb house. Actually there are three *grabhagṛhas* in the cave. The arrangement fits in the pattern of a *trikūṭa* type of temple of which the apex is occupied by Brahmā, a tradition something exceptional and unique within the area of our study. Thus, Brahmā is assigned the pivotal place in this cave.

The Trimūrti orientation of the caves gets strongly substantiated at Tirucci. The cave is in a way remarkable for its programme, comparable to the Tirumūrti-*maṇḍapa* of Māmallapuram and the Cave II at Moghulrājapuram. Iconographically speaking the Lord is *samapāda-sthānaka* and *caturbhuja*. He holds the usual emblems in *parahastas*. The front left is in *ūru* and right *abhaya hastas*. The Lord is decorated with the usual ornaments.

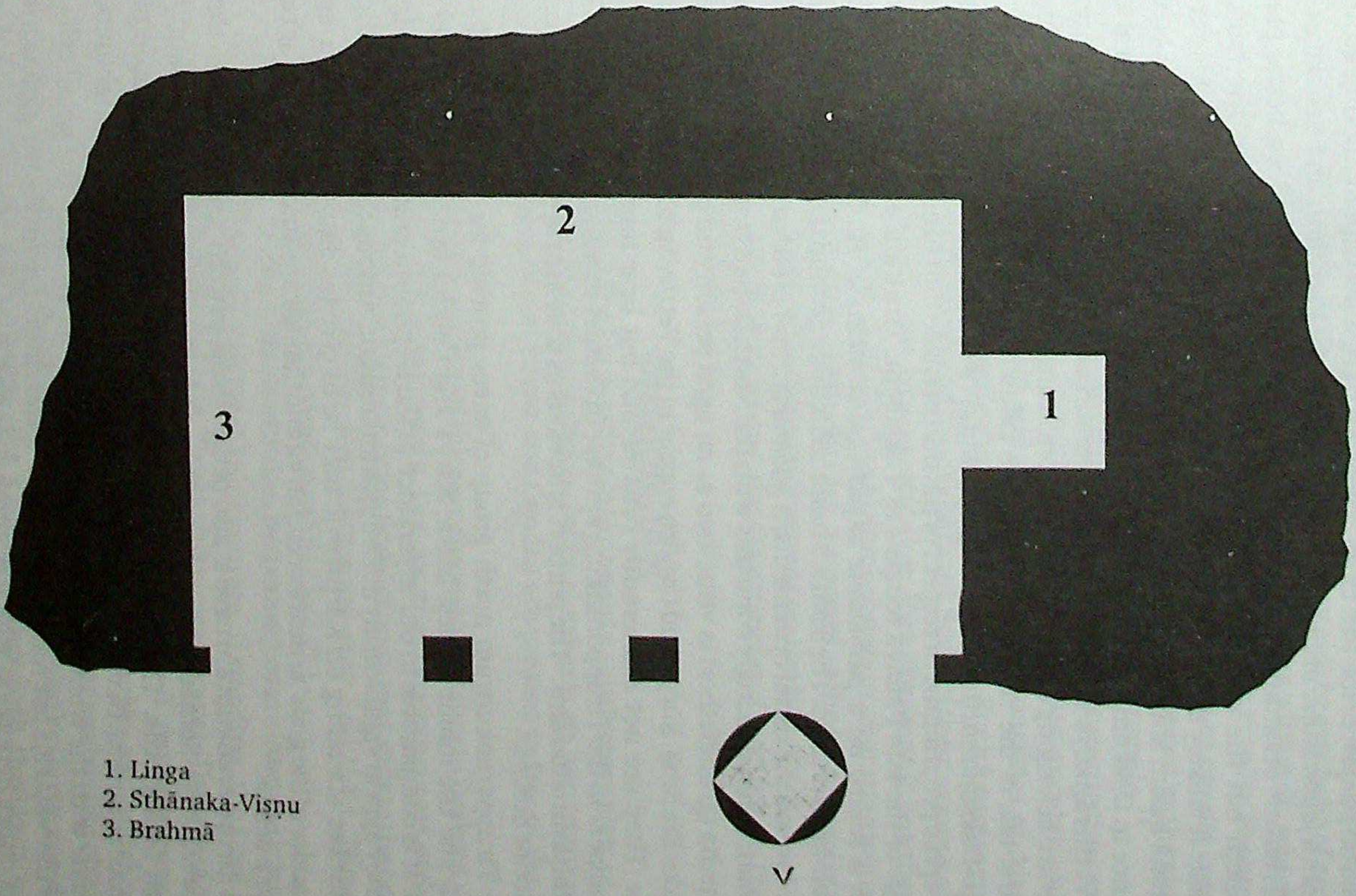
SOUTH OF KĀVIRI

The region south of the river, Kāviri, the boundary between the Pallava and Pāṇḍya countries, is not that significant for a study of Brahmā and the minor deities. Brahmā finds a part as seated on the *padma* emanating from the *nābhi* of Viṣṇu-Śeṣaśāyī and as an integral member of Liṅgodbhavamūrti. Padmanābhi-Brahmā is usually seated on the cosmic flower, *caturbhuja* and holding his usual emblems. The mode appears south of the river Kṛṣṇā in several of the important cave temples at Uṇḍavalli, Māmallapuram (Mahiṣāsuramardinī-*maṇḍapa*), Ciṅkāvaram, Malaiyaṭippaṭṭi, Nāmakkal, Tirumeyyam and Tiruttaṇkāl. Excepting the Mahiṣāsuramardinī-*maṇḍapa*, including the Shore temple of Māmallapuram, all images of Śeṣaśāyī are housed in *garbhagṛhas*. The tradition sharply contrasts with our Deccani experience (e.g. specimen housed in Caves XV, XVI and XXVII of Ellora and the Kont-*guḍi)*. Brahmā as appearing on the lotus of genesis in these specimens would stand proof of his subordinate status to Viṣṇu, the latter supposed to be his Father.[10] Liṅgodbhavamūrti is another important form of which the best are found in the Kailāsa of Kāñci and the cave temples at Tirumeyyam, Kuṉṉakuṭi and Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi. Brahmā and Viṣṇu appear in these works, being subordinated to Liṅga-Mahādeva. Both stand on *primus interpares* level, the Sthāṇu being Lord par excellence. The Tirumeyyam and Piḷḷaiyāmaṭṭi pieces are typologically unique because they provide for no Brahmā and Viṣṇu. In other specimens, Brahmā appears to the right side of the Sthāṇu in *sthānaka* attitude with four hand, the back two holding usual emblems. The front two are in *añjalibandha*. The status of Brahmā in the Pāṇḍyan caves is of a tertiary level.

There are only a handful of Brahmā images that stand to his credit or further discredit. Those assigning him a better status are found in the Tirumalaipuram cave temple and the Kaḻukumalai monolithic temple. In the cave temples of Kerala no image of Brahmā appears.

Among the Pāṇḍyan works on the subject, the Tirumalaipuram piece is something unique, comparable to the Tirucci lower cave. The cave is oblong in shape with the cella, housing a Liṅga, found on the left lateral side. The right side wall, falling in an axial alignment with the Liṅga, houses an image of Brahmā in a *koṣṭha*. The back wall of the cave consists of three niches with Viṣṇu in centre, Naṭeśa and Gaṇapati to his right and left respectively. We find a *trikūṭa* type of programme in which the apex is occupied by Viṣṇu with the Liṅga to his left and Brahmā to the right (cf. the Trimūrtis in the Milk Maids Cave XXVII of Ellora). Though the Liṅga-Mahādeva occupies the cella, he is placed on an equal footing with Brahmā and with Viṣṇu topping the pyramid. It is one level of programme in which the Trimūrti orientation of the cave attaches importance to Viṣṇu as a God par excellance.

Brahmā in the Tirumalaipuram cave is *sthānaka* in *samapāda* attitude and *caturbhuja*. He holds the *puṣtaka* (?) and *kamaṇḍalū*(?) in *parahastas*. The front left is suspended below


1
2
3
V
1. Linga
2. Sthānaka-Viṣṇu
3. Brahmā

4. Plan, Cave temple, Tirumalaipuram

and placed on *puñjam* of the loin cloth. The front right is perhaps in inviting attitude. The Lord wears a *jaṭāmakuṭa, uttarīya, udarabandha*, a long lion cloth and necklaces.

The Trimūrti orientation of the cave temple seems to have been better planned at Cokkampaṭṭi but the womb house consisting of three sections on the back wall is incomplete. It is likely that the cave should be placed on par with the tricellar caves of the lower Kṛṣṇā basin, Māmallapuram, Maṇṭakappaṭṭu and Māmaṇṭur. What is of special importance in Cokkampaṭṭi is that it consists of two more cellae on the lateral sides.[11]

The Veṭṭuvāṉkōyil at Kaḻukumalai is a remarkable monument, which is a repository of rare icons, belonging to the Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Kumāra and Brahmā themes. The *koṣṭhas* in the first *taḷa* of the *vimāna* illustrate the following themes: Umāsahitamūrti (east), Mṛdaṅga-Dakṣiṇāmūrti (south), Yoga-Nṛsiṁha (west) and seated Brahmā (north). The iconographic programme in respect of the northen side is in tune with the *koṣṭhas* on the *pādavarga* of the late Pallava temples at Takkōlam, Tiruttaṇi and Tirukkaḻukkuṉṟam. Brahmā is seated on a *padmāsana* in *padmāsana* attitude. He holds the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū* in *parahastas*. The front left hand holds a *puṣtaka* and the right is in *abhayamudrā*. The Lord wears the usual ornaments, a *jaṭāmakuṭa* and *uttarīya*. The Lord has a smiling countenance that strikingly contrasts with the North Indian tradition in which the Lord as Pitāmaha (grandfather) is visualized as an aged person and provided with beards.[12]

Besides Brahmā, Sūrya and Candra appear in the Veṭṭuvāṉkōyil. Both are seated and *dvibhuja*. They are not exuberantly ornamented but bear imprints of a halo. Similar figures appear in the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam cave in themes relating to Kārttikeya, Gaṇapati and Mahiṣāsuramardinī. The purport is obvious as they are supposed to be attending on the superior deities.

The Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam north group of caves provide for no important image of Brahmā and the minor deities. Indra, Sūrya and Candra are part and parcel of other themes. It is comparable to our experience in the Elephanta and Ellora caves. In the Far South they appear significantly at Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam. Among the *dikpālakas*, Indra is the only member attending on Kārttikeya, may be to give his daughter in marriage to the Commander of the gods' armed forces. Sūrya and Candra are among the Navagrahas, the planetary deities.[13]

The Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam cave is also of the *trikūṭa* pattern, comparable to the Tirucci lower cave. Liṅga-Somāskanda occupies the east facing cella and Viṣṇu-Vaikuṇṭhamūrti the west facing cella. The third shrine-chamber faces the north and accommodates Mahiṣāsuramardinī. Devī replaces Brahmā. Brahmā is placed in a special chamber which falls in line with the womb house of Śiva but at a lower attitude. The small cella is to the front of the Naṭarāja bas relief. The *praṇāla* 'waterchute' meant for the *garbhagṛha* of Śiva finds its outlet here upon which Brahmā is seated. In a way it is in tune with the later Pallava tradition as found at Tiruttaṇi and Tirukkaḻukkuṉṟam where the *koṣṭha* meant for Brahmā appears just above the waterchute. The significance in Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam is that there is no niche but the Lord just seated upon the opening of the *praṇāla*. It is to assign a subordinate place to the God of Creation. It may also be symbolic of certain ritual ideas. The Liṅga is housed in the cella. He is offered *abhiṣekas* with milk, which symbolic of the cosmic seed oozes from the *liṅgāgra* and moves out of the *praṇāla*. Brahmā perhaps is posted here to pick up the seeds and carry out his activities of cosmic creation. The Tantric orientation of the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam cave is further attested by the placement of Brahmā at a specified spot within the framework of the Hindu temple.[14]

The *dvārapālakas* (Pls. VII, XLVI - XLVIII) acquire a new dimension in the cave temples of Tamil Nadu, beginning with the Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa*. The robust and dynamic personalities of the Ellora-Elephanta circle and the charming personalities of Alampūr are transformed into *ṛṣis*, paying homage to the Lords of the house. Such figures appear in the cave at Āṉaimalai, Tirukkōlakkuṭi and Vīraśikhāmaṇi. Some of them are named after the heroes of the *Mahābhārata* by the local people (e.g. Vīraśikhāmaṇi) but they are *ṛṣis* attending on the gods (Pls. XLV.2, XLIX). The Kuṭumiyāmalai rock-cut temple is a unique type in locating the *dvārapālakas*. Normally they are posted at the *façade* level of the caves or at the *dvāra*-point. At Kuṭumiyamalai, they appear on the side walls.

Caṇḍikeśvara gets an important place in the cave temples of Ariṭṭapaṭṭi (Pls. XXXVI, XXXVII) and Āṉaimalai (Pl. XLVI.1).

CONSOLIDATION

The list of minor deities in the Far South fails to present a satisfactory picture. Brahmā occupies the first place. Among the *dikpālakas*, Indra alone gets an important place and that too in one or two instances. Sūrya and Candra are present in few of the Śeṣaśāyī panels.

Three important iconographical variables are traceable relating to Brahmā. They are seated and standing types and Brahmasāsta. Besides, the Lord forms part of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava themes, significant among them being Somāskanda that adds to the numerical superiority (38/75, 50%). The independent images are only 16 (21%). Those which constitute members of other subjects dominate (55/75, 73%).

Brahmā when seated is in *sukhāsana* attitude. Best examples are from the later Pallava temples at Takkōlam, Tiruttaṇi and Tirukkaḻukkuṉṟam. If standing, the Lord is either *samapāda* in most cases or *tribhaṅga* (e.g. Tirukkaḻukkuṉṟam cave). The noted *sthānaka* specimens are from Māmallapuram, Tirucciráppaḷḷi, Tirumalaipuram and Tirukkaḻukkuṉṟam. In both types the Lord is uniformly *trimukha* and *caturbhuja*. The hands bear the *akṣamālā*, *kamaṇḍalū*, *padma*, *puṣtaka* and various *mudrās* like *abhaya*, *ūru*, *kaṭi*, *kaṭaka*, *dhyāna* and *āvāhana*. When seated, the Lord is attended by Devīs, noted among the examples being from Kāñcīpuram (the Kailāsa). Either both the Devīs or one is present, seated in *mahārājalīlāsana*. The Lord is rarely attended by *ṛṣis* as at Aihole, the other example being the Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa* at Māmallapuram.

Brahmasāsta is a rare type found only in the Tamil temples. The Lord in the form is either seated or standing. The image of the Kaḻukumalai monolithic temple is likely to represent the type. The emblems and other attributes are usually the same. In the Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa* and Kaḻukumalai he wears the *cannavīra*.

Among the other themes of which Brahmā forms a part, Somāskanda is the most striking from the quantitative point of view. Not less than 38 specimens are there, mostly concentrated in the temples of Kāñcīpuram and Māmallapuram. The bust of Brahmā appears behind the head of Śiva, endowed with four hands. The *parahastas* hold the usual emblems while the *pūrvahastas* exhibit *mudrās* to show appreciation or homage to the Lord Superior. Somāskanda in the Pallava country is the parallel of Trimūrti in the Upper Deccan. The Rāṣṭrakūṭas gave shape to Trimūrti because in the metropolitan Cāḷukyan zone in and around Badāmī no equal to Somāskanda could be inserted.

Among the other usual types that include Brahmā are Tripurāntaka, Kalyāṇasundara and Liṅgodbhavamūrti. Most of these specimens are concentrated in Kāñcīpuram. An important addition to the list is Brahamaśirascchedakamūrti and Ūrdhvatāṇḍavamūrti, both classical impressions among the early medieval iconographical types. Among them, the latter had its interaction with the Rāṣṭrakūṭa artists at Ellora (Kailāsa). It is an important motif to show Pallava influence on the art of the Deccan.

Another dimension of the imagery of Brahmā is that he forms part of few Vaiṣṇava themes. The Vaikuṇṭha Perumāḷ temple in its catalogue of iconographs includes few rare specimens of Brahmānugrahamūrti. It is the only one of its type within the entire range of early medieval art. Another significant representation is Brahmā, doing *pādapūja* to the lifted foot of Trivikrama. Though we find the classical works on the subject in the Badāmī caves (especially no. III), Trivikrama adored by Brahmā is the novelty of Māmallapuram (Varāha-*maṇḍapa*). Brahmā as a member of Śeṣaśāyī and attending on Viṣṇu in the Nāmakkal cave are other important themes.

Among the *dikpālakas* the only significant work is that of Indra in the Arjuna-*ratha*. Sūrya and Candra also form part of the Śeṣaśāyī panel. These two members of the Navagraha family appear independently in the Veṭṭuvāṉkōyil at Kaḻukumalai. When compared with the Deccan, the imagery of minor deities in the Far South is shadowy.

REFERENCES

1. In the architectural order of the Hindu temple the *vimāna*-superstructure is an important member. Cave temples do not provide for it. Of the three important members, viz., plinth, *pāda* and *vimāna*, cave temples provide for the first two. The Pallavas very ingeniously provide for the *vimāna* also though the impressions are not that conspicuous but important additions when compared with the tradition in Upper Deccan. But in few of the caves (e.g. Rāmeśvara No. XXI of Ellora) *vimāna* forms appear just above the doorway of the *garbhagṛha*.

TABLE III
DISTRIBUTION OF ICONOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES: FAR SOUTH

Iconographical variables	Distribution pattern: placewise							
	Mama.	Tiruk	Kāñci	T.T.	Tiruchi	P.C.	M.C.	Total
Brahmā:								
Seated	-	1	4	2	-	-	2	9
Standing	2	1	-	-	1	-	1	5
Brahmasāsta	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
p/o Somāskanda	8	-	30	-	-	-	-	38
p/o Śaivite themes*	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	10
p/o Vaiṣṇava themes**	1	-	2	-	-	2	2	7
Dikpālakas:								
Indra	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Sūrya	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Candra	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2

* Śaivite themes include Liṅgodbhavamūrti, Kalyāṇasundaramūrti, Tripurāntaka and Brahmaśirascchedakamūrti.

** Vaiṣṇava themes include Brahmānugrahamūrti, Śeṣaśāyī and Trivikrama.

Abbreviations:				
	Mama.	Māmallapuram,	Tiruk.	Tirukkaḻukkuṉṟam,
	T.T.	Tiruttaṇi & Takkōlam,	P.C.	Putukkōṭṭai Circle
	M.C.	Maturai Circle.		

Like carvings are also found in the caves of Badāmī, especially cave I. These *vimāna* forms are in different shapes such as *nāgara* (square type *vimānas*), *kūṭaśāla* and so on. Significantly enough the *rekhanāgara* type is absent.

2. It is an incomplete structure but could be compared with the monolithic *gopura*-like motif, appearing atop the main *dvāra* of Kailāsa, cave XVI of Ellora.
3. K.R. Srinivasan, *Cave Temples of the Pallavas*, p.159.
4. See Vol. IV, Pt. I, for the myth associated with Kārttikeya as one who reprimands Brahmā and teaches Śiva. See also R.K.K. Rajarajan, Rare Images of Brahmasāsta and Kūrmasaṁhāra, *Kalā*, I, pp. 129-34.
5. Raju Kalidos, Trimūrti Orientation in the South Indian Temples, *Kalā*, I, pp. 93-102.
6. Usually Somāskandamūrti is not accompanied by any vehicle but in the Mahiṣāsuramardinī-*maṇḍapa* the zoomorphic Nandi is couchant and lies in front. Both Śiva and Umā have their

suspended legs rested on the beast's back. For an interesting article linking the bull with Somāskandamūrti see A. Velusamy Suthanthiran, A Unique Image of Somāskandamūrti, *Annali AION*, Naples, Vol. 50:3, 1990, pp. 321-24.

7. For detailed examination see Raju Kalidos, Tantrick Buddhist Interaction with the Development of Iconography in Tamil Nadu, *Tamil Civilization*, Vol. IV, 1986, pp. 77-85.
8. See Raju Kalidos, Yoninilayā: Concept and Application in South Indian Art, *East and West*, Vol. 40, 1990, p. 130.
9. The middle cella in the Shore temples houses a specimen of Ābhicārikasayanamūrti which provides for no attendant deities, including Śeṣa and Brahmā.
10. Śeṣaśāyī, especially the Ciṅkāvaram and Tirumeyyam, pieces are classical impressions on the subject. They include a wide variety of minor deities, attending on the Lord. The Mahiṣāsuramardinī-*maṇḍapa* panel though a comparatively smaller frame includes Nāgadevatas who kneeling below the Lord are paying *añjali*.
11. It is likely to have been planned in a pattern akin to the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam north cave. That is to say with a cella on the back wall with two niches, the other two cellae being lateral.
12. C. Sivaramamurti, *Kaḻukumalai and Early Pandyan Rock-out Shrines*, p. 21.
13. Raju Kalidos, Structure and Organisation of the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam Cave *Annali AION*, Vol. 51:3,1991,pp.263-79.
14. R.K.K. Rajarajan, Further Light on the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam Caves, *Annali AION*, Vol. 51:4,1991, pp. 395-408.

CHAPTER V

Classification and Analysis

Brahmā is a common factor, present in all the zones in both seated and standing postures. He also forms part of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava iconographical forms. Among the minor gods, the *dikpālakas* are a common factor. They are mostly concentrated in the Deccan while in the Far South Indra alone appears. Similarly, Candra is present in the Upper Deccan and the Far South while Sūrya is present in all the zones. The *Nidhis* appear only in the Deccan. Nandi, *Garuḍa, Nāgas, Dvārapālakas, Apsarase* and other attendants are mostly present in all the zones.

For an analysis and interpretation we take into account only such deities who are easily accountable by a statistical analysis. Others like *Nāgas, Dvārapālakas* and *Apsarase* who appear redundantly are exempted. Under the present head we discuss the distribution pattern of Brahmā, the *Dikpālakas*, the *Nidhis*, Sūrya and Candra. Others are just enumerated without giving any emphasis to statistical data.

BRAHMĀ

From out of a total of 188 images accounted under the head 142 (75%) are on Brahmā. Among them, 43 (23%) are independent and the rest 98 (52%) form part of other themes, Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava. It is to point out that Brahmā is not totally independent and that his relevance is to be explained with reference to Śiva or Viṣṇu.

Brahmā as part of other themes

The Śaiva themes of which Brahmā is a member are the following: Yogīśvara, Naṭarāja, Kalyāṇasundaramūrti, Liṅgodbhavamūrti, 'Dice Game', Ardhanārīśvara, Gaṅgādhara, Gajasaṁhāramūrti, Lakulīśa (Maṇḍapeśvara), Tripurāntaka, Somāskandamūrti, Trimūrti, Brahmaśirascchedakamūrti (Kailāsa of Kāñci), Ūrdhvatāṇḍavamūrti (Kailāsa of Kāñci) and the like. The common factors among them are Liṅgodbhavamūrti and Tripurāntaka. Numerically speaking, the major concentration is in the Far South, mainly because of Somāskandamūrti. Taking the variables into consideration, we find a better distribution in the Upper Deccan, especially in the caves of Elephanta and Ellora. In the Elephanta cave, Brahmā forms part of Skanda that fails to appear in other zones.

Among the Vaiṣṇava forms, the common factor is Śeṣaśāyī in which Brahmā appears, seated on a lotus, which springs from the navel of reclining Viṣṇu. In this case the concentration is mostly in the Far South. The specimens found in the Ciṅkāvaram, Malaiyaṭippaṭṭi and Tirumeyyam caves are classical works on the subject. Trivikrama in the Varāha-*maṇḍapa* of Māmallapuram includes Brahmā.

The induction of a major god of the religion into iconographical forms of other sects should have been due to philosophical orientation or sectarian animosity. For example, forms like Liṅgodbhavamūrti, Kalyāṇasundaramūrti and Tripurāntaka include Brahmā as warranted by the purāṇic theme. Several of the illustrations in the Ellora and Elephanta caves are due mainly to sectarian animosity.[1] That is to say a deliberate attempt was made to denigrade the personality of Brahmā in view of the fact that no independent cult had developed after the polycephalous god. It may be due to the *bhakti* cult, which was mainly the bye-product of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava savants.

In most forms, the Lord is seated, *trimukha* and *caturbhuja*. Either a *padmapīṭha* or *haṁsa* provides the seat for the Lord. He holds the usual emblems, the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū* in *parahastas*. The *pūrvahastas* in many are in *añjalibandha*. There are slight variations in some of the rare panels. For example, the Naṭarāja panel in the Maṇḍapeśvara cave provides the *sruk*. In Kalyāṇasundaramūrti form, the Lord is seated in front of Śiva, doing the *agnicārya*. He serves as a charioteer in the Tripurāntaka panels. The Liṅgodbhavamūrti in addition to a *sthānaka* Brahmā, doing *añjali*, includes the zoomorphic *haṁsa* or an anthropomorphic Brahmā himself in flying attitude to scale the summit. Brahmā is unicephalous in the Trivikrama panel of Māmallapuram. Of all the known *śilpa* texts, the *Śrītattvanidhi* (1:4:3), prescribes the *ekamukha* for Brahmā in a variation called Prajāpati-Brahmā. Somāskandamūrti in the core zone of Pallava art includes Brahmā who is mostly in bust form. The kind of representation appears again in the Moghulrājapuram cave (no. II). The Trimūrti of the Elephanta type is another unique subject. The emblems on the side of Brahmā usually consist of *darpaṇa, akṣamālā* and *ñānamudrā*. The Brahmaśirascchedakamūrti of Kāñci finds Brahmā in doleful attitude, an uncommon portrayal within the area of study.[2] The posture is warranted by the subject-matter of the illustration.

Independent Representations

The independent images of Brahmā are either seated or standing. If seated, the Lord appears on a *padmapīṭha* in most cases. A pan-Indian theme, the Kont-*guḍi* at Aihole provides a fully blossomed lotus for the Lord's seat, the only one of its type within the period of study. In few of the illustrations the Lord appears on a *haṁsapīṭha*. Good examples are Badāmī Cave III and the Rāmaliṅga group in Aihole. The Hucchapayya temple at Aihole provides a bird that is frontal, the Lord being seated on it in *pralambapāda* attitude.

If seated, the Lord is usually in *ardhapadmāsana* or *padmāsana* attitude. In two rare instances, the *pralambapāda* is applied. They are found in Cave XXI of Ellora and the Hucchapayya-*guḍi* at Aihole. One of the specimens housed in the Alampūr museum provides the *utkuṭikāsana* for the Lord. It is a posture mostly *yogis* take in Indian art of which a good illustration is found in the open air *bas relief*, illustrating the Great Penance, at Māmallapuram.[3]

Standing images of Brahmā are mostly in *sampāda* attitude. From Cave XXVII in Ellora to Tirumalaipuram the *samapāda-sthānaka* image is almost typical of Brahmā. Another good example is Bhairavakoṇḍa wherein not less than half a dozen specimens exist on the subject. However, among the exception is the Tirukkaḻukkuṉṟam cave wherein the Lord is *tribhaṅga*.

The emblems typical of Brahmā are the *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalū*. The *sruk* and *sruva* appear in few of the specimens. The *puṣtaka* and *padma* (Hucchapayya-*guḍi* at Aihole and Ādivarāha-Viṣṇu-*gṛha* at Māmallapuram) are among other rare emblems. The *daṇḍa* (Laṅkeśvara and XVII of Ellora) and *gadā* (XXVII of Ellora) are there. Among the *mudrās* the common elements are *abhaya, dhyāna, ūru* and *kaṭi* (Tirumalaipuram). *Kaṭakamudrā* (Badāmī Cave III) and *āvāhanamudrā* (Tirumalaipuram) are rare. The Lord holds a garland in a rare case (Kont-*guḍi*, Aihole).[4]

The ornaments include *jaṭāmakuṭa, uttarīya, mālās, kaṅkanas, keyūras* and so on. The *uttarīya* (Hucchapayya-*guḍi*, Aihole) is marked with the head of an antelope, which makes it a *kṛṣṇajīna*. It is a rare emblem attributed to Brahmā. The Lord wears the *cannavīra* in rare cases (Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa*, Māmallapuram and Veṭṭuvāṉkōyil, Kaḻukumalai).

The Lord in most instances appears all alone. Devīs, Sāvitrī and Gāyatrī, appear in Cave XVI Ellora and the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñci. At times he is attended by one of the Devīs alone. *Ṛṣis* and *vidyādharas* are present in few rare cases. Badāmī Cave III, the Kont-*guḍi* at Aihole, Virūpākṣa temple at Paṭṭadakkal and Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa* at Māmallapuram include *ṛṣis* among the attendants. Those in the Māmallapuram cave are *dvārapālakas* who hold the *sruk* in their hands. It is a rare element. Another important feature traceable in the Lower Deccan is that the figure of Brahmā is encircled by a panel of *aṣṭadikpālakas*. Good examples are Badāmī III and the Kont-*guḍi* at Aihole.

Brahmā occupies an important place within the iconographic programme of few of the early medieval temples. A *trikūṭa* pattern, is discernible in Caves XV, XVII and XXV of Ellora, the Ādivarāha-Viṣṇu-*gṛha* at Māmallapuram, Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñci, Tiruccirāppaḻḻi lower cave and the Tirumalaipuram cave. Besides, the tricellar caves in places like Moghulrājapuram (e.g. no. II) and Māmallapuram (Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa*) are oriented towards the Trimūrti concept. The idea is naively pointed out in the structural temples of Aihole of which the good examples are Hucchapayya, Kont-*guḍi* and Rāmaliṅga *devasthānam*. In all these instances Brahmā receives a *primus interpares* status.

Identifications

Most forms seem to follow the simple types elaborated in the *Mayamata* and the *Śaivāgama*, cited in *Śrītattvanidhi* (1:4:1). The latter text names the form Caturmukha who holds the *akṣamālā, kamaṇḍalū, sruva* and *puṣtaka* in the hands. The Lord is supposed to be seated on a *padmapīṭha*, and attented by Devis.

However, some of the rare emblems attributed to few of the images could be explained tentatively with due reference to textual correlation. The Lord who holds the *daṇḍa*, and so called *daṇḍadhara*, is likely to follow the *Samarāṅganasūtradhāra* and the *Matsya Purāṇa*. Good examples are the specimen in Laṅkeśvara (Cave XVI, Ellora) and Cave XVII, Ellora. The Lord holding a club in the Milk Maids cave (No. XXVII of Ellora) may also be of the same type.

The *Rūpamaṇḍana* speaks of a special attribute for the Lord called *jayamālā* 'garland of victory' as opposed to *japamālā* 'garland of austerity'. It might be a subtle way of reference to the *cannavīra*. Specimens in the Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa* and Veṭṭuvāṉkōyil at Kaḻukumalai are likely to be after the source. The *Rūpamaṇḍana* may belong to a later period chronologically speaking but it might be an echo of the tradition of earlier times.

Images of Brahmā, appearing in Liṅgodbhavamūrti panels with hands folded in *añjalibandha* may be compared with a form called Viśvakarma-Brahmā, recorded in the *Śrītattvanidhi* (1:4:5). Of all the known types of the Lord, it is Viśvakarma who is supposed to have the hands in *añjali* aspect. Good examples are found in Caves XV and XVI of Ellora and the Kailāsa of Kāñci.

DIKPĀLAKAS

The *Dikpālakas* are mostly associated with other themes. That is to say independent representations are rare. Another important point is that, except in two important cases (i.e., Yogīśvara of the Kailāsa and Naṭarāja of *Ḍumārleṇa* at Ellora) all the eight do not appear uniformly. Another exception in the Upper Deccan is the *façade* of Kailāsa, Ellora. Even in this case two are found ruined and one appearing on *mayūravāhana* poses problems of identification. It is only in the Lower Deccan that the *dikpālakas* appear within a circumscribed space. Examples begin with Cave III in Badāmī, supposed to be earliest in point of time among the Cāḷukyan caves, assigned to the late 6th century A.D. Other good examples are found in Paṭṭadakkal (Kāśi-Viśvanātha and Mallikārjuna), Aihole (Kont-*guḍi* and Rāmaliṅga *devasthānam*) and Ālampūr (Bāla- and Svarga- Brahmā temples). The earliest available specimen in Badāmī would guide us to generalise that the *Dikpālakas* in early medieval art is a Cāḷukyan innovation, which makes headway into the Upper Deccan during the heyday of Cāḷukya and Rāṣṭrakūṭa artistic activity. Specimens in the Far South are practically of no use to form an idea of *aṣṭadikpālakas*. The only remarkable piece is Indra in Arjuna-*ratha* who is likely to be of an entirely different cultural denomination spoken with reference to the *tiṇai* classification of territorial units as lord of *marutam* tract. It is enigmatic to find that no temple for Indra has come out though the Twin Epics in Tamil speak so eloquently about them during the yester saga of religious tradition. Another important point is that Varuṇa also fails to appear in plastic arts under the Pallavas and Pāṇḍyas.

The cognizable emblem for the *dikpālakas* in the plastic arts is their mount. Though canons of sculpture talk about their attributes in hands, except in case of Indra and in rare instances Varuṇa and Yama, none of them hold any weapon.

Depending upon the manner of distribution with regard to the cluster of *dikpālakas*, certain patterns are discernible. In this regard, there seems to be no chronological sequence in the manner of distribution. There are independent representations of any one of them. The two classical examples are Indra in the Arjuna-*ratha* at Māmallapuram and the Rāvulaphaḍi at Aihole. Both are seated on *gaja*. The Aihole specimen is better cast with regard to iconographical attributes because the Lord holds the *vajra*. In the Māmallapuram piece no such emblem is found. It is one of the best on the subject, spoken with reference to the volume and depth of work done. It stands on a par with the specimens found at the *façade* section of the Kailāsa of Ellora. Another isolated example of a *dikpālaka* is that of Varuṇa found in the step-well of the Ucchimalli-*guḍi* at Aihole. He is seated on *makaravāhana*.

The next type of representation is any two of the *dikpālakas* appearing in a panel. There is only one example of the type in the Hucchapayya-*guḍi* at Aihole. Those present in the illustration are Yama with his Devī and Agni. They form part of the Naṭarāja relief.

Then, appear any four of the *dikpālakas* within a framework. It seems to be the case in the Rāmeśvara (cave XXI) Cave at Ellora wherein the Naṭarāja relief includes Indra Yama, Nirṛtti and Varuṇa. The Mahiṣāsuramardinī of Kailāsa in Ellora includes six among them who are Agni and Vāyu in addition to the four, noted in the previous specimen. There seems to be a progress from two to eight in a disorderly pattern.

The vital coincidence in most cases is that the *vāhanas* and emblems are the same except in rare instances. The table on next page explains the aspect.

Historically speaking Indra, Varuṇa, Yama, Agni and Kubera were the most ancient among the *dikpālakas*. Others joined the picture later. By about the 6th century A.D. the evolution reaches a stage of perfection in Cave III at Badāmī. Sporadically the ancient practice persisted in certain circles. It is from the Alampūr saga onwards that a definitive concept of the *aṣṭadikpālakas*, housing them in the regions meant for each, came to be firmly established. It is the case with regard to the Deccan. In the Far South, Indra and Varuṇa were accommodated into the cultural system as gods of the two landed regions for which there are literary evidences down to the 6th century A.D. Maybe as a result of the *bhakti* movement, they pale into insignificance afterwards. It may be the reason why no importance is given to these two divinities in the arts of the Pallavas and Pāṇḍyas.[5]

Direction	*Regent*	*Vehicle*	*Emblems*
East	Indra	*gaja* 'elephant'	*vajra* 'thunderbolt'
Southeast	Agni	*meṣa* 'ram'	Devī (Badami III) forest of fire (Alampūr)
South	Yama	*mahiṣa* 'buffalo'	Devī (Badāmī III) *pāśa* in Kālāri panel (Ellora XV)
Southeast	Nirṛtti	*nara* 'man' or donkey (Yogīśvara of XVI, Ellora)	with Devī (Badāmī III) *dhvaja* (Svarga-Brahmā, Alampūr)
West	Varuṇa	*makara*, rhinoceros (Naṭarāja of XXIX, Ellora)	*padma (façade*, Ellora XVI)
Northwest	Vāyu	gazelle (*mṛga*)	with Devī (Badāmī III)
North	Kubera	*padmapīṭha* (Naṭarāja of XXIX, Ellora)	
Northeast	Īśāna	bull	

Totally twenty seven specimens are traceable of which only two are from the Far South. Majority of them are from the Upper Deccan 55% (15/27, 55%) and 37% (10/27) from Lower Deccan. Most of them form part of other subjects (19/27, 70%), independent representations being meagre quantitatively (8/27, 30%).

PLANETARY DEITIES

Sūrya and Candra are the popularly known among the planetary deities. It seems the idea of *Navagrahas* is a later medieval development over the roots that existed earlier. Totally 13 specimens exist on the subject which comparatively speaking is a meagre percentage (13/188, 7%).

Both conform to the prescriptions of *śilpa* texts. They are *dvibhuja*, *sthānaka* and hold *padmas* in hands. Among the specimens bearing on Sūrya, the Paṭṭadakkal piece in the Virūpākṣa temple is one of the most outstanding that seems to follow the mandate prescribed by the *Mayamata*. Another important piece is from Ellora Cave XXV. An example of the seated type is found in the Veṭṭuvāṇkōyil at Kaḻukumalai, which is the only one on the subject. An interesting alignment notable in the Rāmaliṅga group at Aihole is that Sūrya appears in the company of *dikpālakas*. Another example of the same type is to be found in the Bāla-Brahmā temple at Alampūr.

K.R. Srinivasan considers two of the specimens found in the upper section (third *taḷa* of the *vimāna*) of the Dharmarāja-*ratha* with Sūrya and Candra. Though no cognizable emblems are found in the specimens, with reference to their location they are considered to be so.

THE NIDHIS

The *nidhis, Śaṅkha* and *Padma*, are fewer numerically (6/188) and appear in the Deccan. They are mostly seated, huge bodied and richly ornamented. They hold the emblems *śaṅkha* and *padma* to enable their identification. Mostly they appear as guardians of the gateway as found in the Ellora caves (a good example being cave XVI), Rāvulaphaḍi at Aihole and the Virūpākṣa temple at Paṭṭadakkal.

DEMI-GODS

Vidyādharas, Apsarase, Nāgas, Nandi and *Garuḍa* are among the noteworthy demi-gods. The *dvārapālakas* are almost an universal idiom and appear in case of all types of temples, irrespective of their sectarian affiliation whether Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava or Śākta.

The *dvārapālakas* found in the cave temples of Elephanta and Ellora (especially caves XIV, XV, XVI, XXI, XXIX and the Buddhist caves) are simply unique. The eight figures, guarding the *sarvatobhadra* shrine doorways of Elephanta and Ellora (cave XXIX), are exceptional creations of the Indian artistic genius. According to the *Mayamata* (36: 310-15) Nandi-Kāla, Daṇḍi-Muṇḍi, Vijaya-Bhṛṅgiriti and Gopa-Anantaka are the pairs who guard the east, south, west and north gateways respectively. All are tall and robust, richly ornamented and have a benign or terrific countenance. Few of the temples in Alampūr house some of the most significant pieces in the Lower Deccan. In these cases (e.g., the Svarga-Brahmā temple) the outer wall (*bhiṭṭi*) of the temple consists of four doorways, guarded by *Kṣetrapālakas*, who are *caturbhuja* and hold the emblems expected of them such as the *triśūla, kapāla, khaḍga, kheṭaka, ghaṇṭa* and *nāgapāśa*. In several of the temples we find *dvārapālikas* (e.g., the Koṇēri-*maṇḍapa* and Draupadī-*ratha* of Māmallapuram).[6] In these cases the main temple is dedicated to Devī, the Mother Superior. In Ellora and other caves of the Upper Deccan, Gaṅgā and Yamunā take the place of *dvārapālikas*. Good examples are the main *dvāra* to the monolithic temple of the Kailāsa (Cave XVI) and Rāmeśvara (XXI).

Dvārapālakas are demigods who attend on the superior deities and supposed to be guardians of the temple, its sanctity and cultural system. A beautiful verse in the *Tiruppāvai* (no. 16), part of the *Nālāyirativviyapirapantam*, extols the greatness of the doorkeepers to whom the maidens visiting the temple pay their first homage. They invoke the doorkeepers saying that they may be permitted to make an entry into the temple since they are pure both at heart and body[7] (*infra* Chap. VI). The *Tiruppāvai* hymn is an eye-opener to the mysterious beings, guarding the gateways of the Indian temples, who are to be paid the first homage even before making an entry into the temple complex. The custom has persisted to this day in the Tamil country wherein the orthodox steeped in religious customs keep alive the tradition.[8]

Vidyādharas and *Apsarase* are almost universal figures, appearing in Indian art whether

Hindu, Buddhist or Jain. Usually they are present atop a sculptural relief, floating or in swimming attitude. At times they hold garlands in their hands or hold the hands in the attitude of adoration to the main god. Good examples are from the Elephanta, Ellora, Māmallapuram, Tiruccirāppaḷḷi and Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam caves.

Among the demi-gods associated with major gods of the religion are *Nāgas, Garuḍa* and Nandi. The most important aspect of *Śeṣa-nāga* is his association with Viṣṇu who is supposed to be the Lord's couch, seat and umbrella when he reclines, sits and walks.[9] The *Pāmpu-mettai* 'bed of snake', noted in the Āḻvār hymns, refers to the couch provided by the eternal snake, Ādiśeṣa or Ananta. Most striking among the examples are Ellora (XV), Aihole (Kont-*guḍi*), Uṇḍavalli, Māmallapuram (Mahiṣāsuramardinī-*maṇḍapa*), Ciṅkāvaram, Tirumeyyam, Malaiyaṭippaṭṭi, Nāmakkal and Tiruttaṇkal. The seat is provided by Ananta when the Lord sits in his Vaikuṇṭhamūrti form. The best examples are from Badāmī (Cave III) and Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam (north group). The Badāmī piece has no parallel in the 1500 years of the history of Indian art on the subject, not to speak of the Udayagiri prototype which is a marvel in its own way. *Nāgas* are associated with Bhūvarāhamūrti of which the good examples are from Ellora (Cave XVI and XV), Badāmī (Caves II and III), Aihole (Rāvulaphaḍi Cave), Māmallapuram (Varaha-*maṇḍapa* and Ādivarāha-Viṣṇu-*gṛha*) and Nāmakkal. The snake, Kāliya, is associated with Kṛṣṇa in his Kāliyamardana aspect. Vāsuki appears in miniature panels, illustrating Amṛtamanthana event, of which the examples are from Badāmī (Caves II and III). The tradition has its root in Udayagiri wherein the upper section of the doorframe in Cave XIX consists of the motif. The snake is an ornament for Śiva. In early medieval art we find *nāgas* and *nāginīs*, supporting the stalk of the lotus in which Yogīśvara is seated. Good examples are from Elephanta and Ellora (Cave XXIX Caṇḍikeśvara). A remarkable specimen of snake associated with Śiva is the 'Dice Game' panel in the Jogeśvarī cave wherein the zoomorphic reptile appears behind the head of Śiva. The illustration, again, has no parallel in Indian art. It is in imitation of Viṣṇu's Vaikuṇṭhamūrti form whereas the snake associated with Yogīśvara follows the model of Bhūvarāhamūrti.[10]

Another important aspect of the theriomorphic representation of *Nāga* is in the cave and structural temples of the Lower Deccan. The representation consists of a zoomorphic body part of a snake which is coiled in concentric circles. At the middle, the *bindu* section, the anthropomorphic figure appears who has the hoods of a snake and holds *padmas* in hands. Good examples *in situ* are in Badāmī Cave I, Durgā temple at Aihole and Garuḍa-Brahmā temple at Alampūr.

Garuḍa provides the vehicle for Viṣṇu and appears in early medieval art in association with Karivarada-Viṣṇu. The best Gupta specimen on the subject is from the Daśāvatāra temple at Deogarh. *Garuḍa* is mostly anthropomorphic. Good examples are from Ellora (Cave XV), Paṭṭadakkal (Virūpākṣa temple) and Badāmī Cave I (Harihara panel). Another important form of *Garuḍa* appears at the top of the doorframe in the Paṭṭadakkal and

Aihole temples. It is a subregional idiom mostly confined to the core zone of Cāḷukyan art and fails to appear even in Ellora.[11]

Nandi, foremost among the *gaṇas*, attending on Śiva is as important as the Lord himself and so called Nandikeśvara. He is the orderly and confidant of the Lord and so called Adhikāra-Nandi in Tamil tradition. Images of zoomorphic *nandi* usually appear atop the outer *bhiṭṭi*, which provides the enclosure for a temple of Śiva. He is the *dikpālaka* who looks after the *aṣṭa* or *daśa-diks* that surrounded the Lord's house. Another important representation is the special pavilion provided for *nandi* in front of the temple of Śiva which falls in an axial alignment with the *garbhagṛha* and the *mūlabera*. Best examples are the Bhairavakoṇḍa cave temples. Special *maṇḍapas* 'pavilions' were erected in the Ellora caves (e.g., nos. XV, XVI, XXI and XXII). The Takli Ḍhokeśvar cave has a cave-like excavation to accommodate the image of *nandi*. There was a *nandi-maṇḍapa* in front of the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñci but it is dilapidated. Its imitation still exists in all its glory in the Virūpākṣa temple at Paṭṭadakkal. Taking its root in the Kailāsa of Kāñci, the *nandi-maṇḍapa* via Paṭṭaḍakkal reaches it fullfledged form and most elegant expression in Cave XVI, of Ellora.[12]

The association of the zoomorphic Nandi with few of the iconographical forms of Śiva is noteworthy. The Lord is the form is called Vṛṣabhavāhanamūrti or Vṛṣabhārūḍamūrti. Panels illustrating 'Dice Game' in Elephanta and Ellora (Nos. XIV, XXI and XXIX) include a colossal figure of Nandi. In the Ellora caves *nandi* occupies half the space within the frame of the subject. Somāskandamūrti in few of the instances in Tamil Nadu includes *nandi* (e.g., Mahiṣāsuramardinī-*maṇḍapa*).[13] Nandi forms part of Śiva's emblems in rare cases. For example, the *daṇḍa* 'staff', held by Naṭarāja is fitted with a miniature of *nandi* (e.g., Virūpākṣa temple at Paṭṭadakkal and Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam north cave). *Nandi* appears atop the figure of Gaṅgādharamūrti in the Tiruccirāppaḷḷi upper cave.

Maithuna motifs acquire their maturity in few of the early medieval temples. The Tantric roots in Indian art is traced back to the days of Sāñchi and the Buddhist caves of Auraṅgābād[14] but those associated with temples of Hindu order are from the days of the Cāḷukyas in Western India. The form takes its origin in Jogeśvarī and slowly peeps into Ellora. The full and earliest in point of time is Cave III Badami wherein the Lords, Śiva (e.g. Ardhanārīśvara) and Viṣṇu, are found dallying with their mistresses in sexually provocative postures. Another good examples is Cave XXI of Ellora, the erotic content of which has been elaborated by the author in the *East and West* (Vol. 40, 1990, pp. 115-43). Other good examples in Ellora are Cave XVI (*mahāmaṇḍapa* of the main monolithic temple) and Cave XVII.

The erotic theme in early medieval art finds its full expression in the structural temples of Aihole. The Hucchapayya-*guḍi* in its outer wall section consists of a good many number of illustrations, especially *yakṣīs*, making love with young men. Another important site is Alampūr.

Ṛṣis, *Siddhas* and sages find their place within the framework of few of the iconographical types of the age. Bhṛṅgi is a common idiom in the Deccan. A good example is Ardhanārīśvara in Cave I, Badāmī. He appears in many of the Naṭarāja panels. Śeṣaśāyī (e.g. Ellora XV) and Dakṣiṇāmūrti are surrounded by a host of sages. Mārkaṇḍeya appears in Śeṣaśāyī (Malaiyaṭippaṭṭi)[15] and Kālāri panels (Ellora XV). *Gaja* 'elephant' who is an evil being in Śaivite tradition is a devotee of Viṣṇu and is redeemed by the Lord in his Karivarada aspect. Good examples are from Ellora XV and the Virūpākṣa temple at Paṭṭadakkal. *Ṛṣis* are present as attendants in many of the caves in Tamil Nadu. A good examples is the Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa* of Māmallapuram and the panels of Brahmā in Aihole. The Āṉaimalai (Cave II for Murukaṉ), Cokkampaṭṭi and Vīraśikhāmaṇi caves include few of the *ṛṣis* who could not be properly identified. It is interesting to find that they appear in the main pavilion of the cave and carved on the wall section. Agastya appears rarely.

A number of demons are associated with the feats of major deities like Śiva, Viṣṇu and Śaktidevī. A good example is Mahiṣāsuramardinī who slays the zoomorphic *mahiṣa* right from Udayagiri in the north to Māmallapuram in the south. Mahiṣa is mostly zoomorphic in the Deccan while he assumes a theriomorphic form in the Far South. A classical example is found in the Mahiṣāsuramardinī-*maṇḍapa*. Another example is the Atiranachaṇḍa-*maṇḍapa* at Cāluvaṉkupam. Its dull replica is also found in the structural temples of Paṭṭadakkal. Another important development in the Far South is that Devi stands on the decapitated head of *mahiṣa*. Mostly confined to the Far South (e.g. Māmallapuram, Tiruttaṇi, Takkōlam, Ciṅkāvaram, Kuṉṉakuṭi, Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam and so on), a rare example is also found in the Alampūr museum.[16]

Another important demon found in early medieval art is Andhakāsura who is associated with Gajāsura in the Deccan. Both form part of a number of major illustrations in the Upper Deccan; good examples being Elephanta and Ellora (XIV, XV and XXIX). The head of *gajāsura* in zoomorphic form is found in these illustrations at one section while Andhakāsura 'demon of darkness' appears lifted by Śiva in his *triśūla*. In Cave XV of Ellora the demon appearing on the trident appears to be Raktabīja whose blood is collected by Kālī, lying below, who holds a cup to receive the dripping blood.[17]

Another important demon is Rāvaṇa who is popular in the art of the Upper Deccan, good examples being in Elephanta and Ellora (XIV, XVI, XXI and XXIX). A rare miniature is found in the plinth section of the Mahākūṭeśvara temple at Mahākūṭa, which elaborates the story in a different perspective.[18] Rāvaṇa in all these cases is cyclopean in form, endowed with not less than five faces and a number of hands. He is engaged in lifting the Kailāsa, which effort terrifies Devī who clings to the neck of Śiva. The specimen found at the plinth (left side) of the Kailāsa in Ellora is one of the ambitious undertakings of the Indian artist on the subject. All such specimens in Elephanta and Ellora are frozen symbols of the good and evil, always at confrontation with one another.

The equivalent of Rāvaṇa in Vaiṣṇava tradition is Hiraṇya who competes with one of the most ferocious manifestations of Viṣṇu, called Nṛsiṁha. A pan-Indian subject, it is to be found from Ellora in the north to Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam in the south. Especially the specimen found at the plinth of the Nandi-*maṇḍapa* in Kailāsa is one of the most outstanding on the subject. Other demons of equal weight are Madhu and Kaiṭabha, associated with Viṣṇu-Śeṣaśāyi. The specimen found in Mahiṣāsuramardinī-*maṇḍapa* at Māmallapuram is a classical work. In Tirumeyyam we find sparks of *kopāgni* 'fire of ire' issuing forth from the body of Viṣṇu, which move in a wavy manner to dislodge the demons. The work has no parallel in a millennium and a half of work on the subject, beginning with Udayagiri in the north. Other demons appearing in Vaiṣṇava themes are Bali and his son (e.g. Trivikrama of Caves II and III in Badāmī) and Kṛṣṇa uprooting demons like Keśi, the horse (e.g. Upper Śivālaya, Badāmī) and so on.

Kāla, an associate of Yama, appears in few of the Śaiva themes as a villain. A good example is Cave XV, Ellora. He is seated on the buffalo and holds the *kālapāśa* to snatch the life of Mārkaṇḍeya, the eternal sage. Naṭarāja motifs include the demon, Apasmāra, in few rare cases (e.g. Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam South).

The idea of *vāhana* 'vehicle' or 'mount' takes a definitive shape. There are literary references right from the *Ṛg* Vedic period onwards in which most of the gods like Indra, Varuṇa and Mitra are associated with chariots.[19] As the Āryans moved into the different regions in India, the animals and birds in worship by the folk seem to have been accommodated into the higher religions as mounts of the gods and goddesses. A saturation level is reached by about the 6th century A.D. when a number of *vāhanas* for the deities appear. The following examples may be noted:

Siṁha	'lion'	Siṁhavāhinī (Ellora XIV and Kailāsa and Kāñci) Mahiṣāsuramardinī (Māmallapuram and Cāluvaṉkuppam)
Vṛṣabha	'bull'	Vṛṣabhavāhanamūrti (New temple, close to Shore temple, Mallai), Somāskandamūrti (Ellora XVI and Māmallapuram), Īśāna (Ellora)
gaja	'elephant'	Skanda (Ucchimalli-*guḍi*, Aihole), Indrāṇi (Malaiyaṭippaṭṭi)
haṁsa	'goose'	Brahmā (Hucchapayya-*guḍi*, Aihole) Brāhmī (Ellora XIV)
nāga	'snake'	Śeṣaśāyī (Māmallapuram, Tirumeyyam, Udayagiri), Ādimūrti (Badāmī III)
garuḍa	'kite'	Karivarada (Virūpākṣa of Paṭṭadakkal) Vaiṣṇavī (*Yajañśālā*, Ellora)
nara	'man'	Nirṛtti(Alampūr)
preta	corpse	Cāmuṇḍā (*Yajñaśālā*, Ellora)
ulūka	owl	Cāmuṇḍā
meṣa	'ram'	Agni

mahiṣa	'buffalo'	Yama
donkey	-	Nirṛtti (part of Yogīśvara, Ellora XVI)
makara	-	Gaṅgā and Varuṇa
crocodile	-	Yamunā (Ellora XXI)
rhinoceros	-	Varuṇa (Ellora XXIX)
gazelle	*nṛga*	Vāyu
		(T. *kalai*, Skt. *mṛga*) Koṟṟavai of Māmallapuram.

The Hindu pantheon by about the middle of the 9th century A.D. was taking a definitive shape to provide the groundwork for later medieval art. The iconographical variables on the various deities like Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śaktidevī, Gaṇapati and Skanda multiply into a wide variety by about the 17th-18th century A.D. but it is on the solid foundations laid by the early medieval society that the later developments firmly stand.

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Besides Brahmā who is a member of the Hindu Trinity, the other deities are called minor because of their lesser importance in the pantheon. They are the *Dikpālakas, Dvārapālakas, Kṣetrapālakas*, Sūrya and Candra among the planetary deities, the *Nidhis (śaṅkha* and *padma*), *Vidyādharas, Apsarase, Nāgas*, Nandi, *Garuḍa, Ṛṣis, Siddhas*, and demons (Mahiṣāsura, Andhakāsura, Gajāsura, Rāvaṇa, Hiraṇya, Raktabīja and so on), all illustrated in the arts of the period under study. The various deities had by this time appropriated the local folk emblems and absorbed their traits in the form of *vāhanas*, mostly common in the pan-Indian tradition. The lion, bull, elephant, goose, snake, kite and bandicoot were very common and others like the corpse, owl, ram, buffalo, donkey, crocodile, rhinoceros and gazelle were there.

Images of Brahmā appear both independently and as part and parcel of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava themes. He appears either seated or standing. If seated he appears on his characteristic *haṁsa vāhana* and on a *padmapīṭha*. The emblems typical of Brahmā are the *kamaṇḍalū* and *akṣamālā*. It seems the Trimūrti cult was very popular during the period under study. It is proved by the Maṇṭakappaṭṭu and Bhairavakoṇḍa inscriptions. Iconographical evidences are supported by forms such as Trimūrti and Trimūrtis. Among the images of Trimūrtis the lower cave at Tirucci is important because within a *trikūṭa*-like organisation of the cave, the apex is meant for Brahmā. In other zones of art and in most other iconographical forms and architectural setting of the caves Brahmā fails to receive any such position. That means there was an emphasis on the status accorded to Brahmā at Tiruccirāppaḷḷi. There are *trikūṭa* models in Ellora (XV, XVII and XXV) but Brahmā receives a secondary or tertiary treatment. Canons of sculpture speak of a number of forms like Caturmukha, Adhya, Lokapāla, Prajāpati, Vidhi and Viśvakarma and few of them tentatively agree with the specimens traceable. Thus, Caturmukha seems to have been a popular form, which is attested by other literacy references of the age, for example the Tamil sources. Scholars like K.D. Bajpai say Brahmā was an important deity during the later Vedic period and that he lost his status slowly afterwards. Our analysis shows that Brahmā was never that important in art. Having lost his status in the society by about the 7th-8th century A.D. he never recovered afterwards.

The *Dikpālakas*, atleast few of them like Indra, Varuṇa and Agni were principal deities once upon a time under a totally different cultural setting. May be the incoming Āryans accorded them a better status. The mingling of local elements with the alien after 1000 B.C. thoroughly recast the status of deities within the Indian pantheon. All those who were important to the Āryans became tertiary elements in the *bhakti-mārga* approach. Śiva, Viṣṇu, Śaktidevī, Gaṇapati and Murukaṉ-Skanda became the top gods. In the process, local folk elements mingled with the Āryan; the Vedic Rudra with local Civaṉ, Viṣṇu with Cēyōṉ, Skanda with Murukaṉ, the Śakti with Koṟṟavai and so on.

By about the 7th century A.D. the two streams of culture in the Indian context had mixed up so intricately that it is difficult to disentangle the native warp from the foreign woof. Veronic Ions supports the notion that it was the native-Drāviḍian, which prevailed over the foreign-Āryan. In fact under the *bhakti* approach, the native elements found a chance for reflorescence and "their resurgeres was one of the reasons for the decline of the Aryan gods" (Ions 1975: 13). The Vedic Trinity consisting of Indra, Varuṇa and Mitra had given way to Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā. The important Vedic deities had been accommodated in the *bhakti* system as gods of lesser denomination. Natives who adored spirits, snakes, kites, bulls "a universal symbol of male fertility", buffalo and others had become part and parcel of the newly emerging Śaivism, Viṣṇuism (to use Gonda's words) and Śaktism. In the transformation local elements gain an upper hand over the Vedic system of godhood and divinity. The arts of the age mirror the changing pattern of cultural life through the brilliantly composed masterpieces in the cave and structural temples found in the various regions of our study.

REFERENCES

1. The sectarian bickering among the various Hindu sects was responsible for the creation of new iconographical forms. See Raju Kalidos, "Iconography and Symbolism of Pañcamukha Nṛsiṁha", *East and West*, Vol. 37: 1-4, 1987, pp. 283-96; cf. Kalidos 1987.
2. The iconography is elaborated in the *Śrītattvanidhi* (1:2:) but the Kāñci illustration follows its own thematic course.
3. Raju Kalidos, "Stone cars and Rathamaṇḍapas", *East and West*, Vol. 34: 13, 1984, Fig. 5.
4. Cf. the *japamālā*, noted in *Rūpamaṇḍana*, and the *cannavīra* attributed to the Lord in Māmallapuram and Kaḻukumalai (*infra*).
5. The *dikpālakas* and *Navagrahas* acquire a solid shape in the Tamil country only since the later

TABLE IV
DISTRIBUTION OF ICONOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES: CONSOLIDATED LIST

Iconographical variables	Distributiion Pattern: zonewise			
	Upper Deccan	Lower Deccan	Far South	Total
Brahmā:				
Seated	3	9	9	21
Standing	6	9	5	20
Brahmasāsta	-	-	3	3
p/o Trimūrti	19	1	-	20
p/o Somāskanda	1	1	38	40
p/o Śaivite themes	21	-	10	31
p/o Vaiṣṇava themes	-	-	7	7 (142)
Dikpālakas:				
p/o other themes	14	5	-	19
independent	1	4	-	5
Stray: Indra	-	1	2	3 (27)
Śaṅkha and *Padma-nidhis*	3	3	-	6
Sūrya	2	3	-	6
Candra	1	-	2	3 (15)
Total	71	40	77	188

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medieval Cōḻa period and more definitely since the Vijayanagara period in the 14th century A.D.

6. The Pirāṉmalai cave temple, dedicated to Umāsahitamūrti, is guarded by *dvārapālikas*. For the significance of the motif and the Tantric orientation of the cave see R.K.K. Rajarajan, "The Tirumalai Cave Temple: Its Iconographical Significance", *East and West*, 1991.
7. For a detailed examination of the significance of the Tamil text see Vol. I.
8. As one makes an entry into the temple, he is expected to pay homage to the *gopura*, *dhvajastaṁbha*, Nandi and then take permission from the *dvārapālaka* and get into the holy of the holies. When he gets out, he has to visit the shrine of Caṇḍikeśvara, located close to the north wall of the *garbhagṛha*, inform him that he has not removed any of the temple's property.
9. The Āḻvārs talk about this aspect very eloquently in their hymns. See Vol. I, Chap. I.
10. All these idioms ultimately are rooted in Buddhist art. For an elaborate account see Raju Kalidos, "Buddhist Parallels in Hindu Art: A Case Study of Dakṣiṇāmūrti".

11. P.Chandramohan, *Garuda in Medieval Indian Art* (Ph.D.thesis,Tamil University),Thanjavur 1990.
12. M.A. Dhaky, "Nandi Images of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka", *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XXXIV.
13. See A. Veluswamy Suthanthiran, "A Unique Image of Somāskandamūrti", *Annali* AION, Vol. 50: 3, 1990, pp. 321-24.
14. Carmel Berkson, *The Caves at Aurangabad: Early Buddhist Tantric Art in India*, New York 1986.
15. Raju Kalidos, "The Malaiyaḍippaṭṭi Cave Temples", *South Asian Studies*, Vol. IV, 1988, Fig. 12.
16. Raju Kalidos, "Iconography of Mahiṣāsuramardinī: A Probe into Stylistic Evolution", *Acta Orientalia*, Vol. 50, 1989, Figs. 1-21.
17. The type of two-in-one representations have been told by M.Rabe in his recent book, *The Great Penance at Mamallapuram*, Chennai 2001.
18. Raju Kalidos, "A Rare miniature of Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti", *Annali* AION,15 : 2,1991, pp.214-20.
19. Raju Kalidos, "The Wood Carvings of Tamil Nadu: An Iconographical Survey", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1988, no. 1, pp. 99-100, 107-8.

CHAPTER VI

Reflections on Social Life and Aesthetic Trends

Brahmā is the God of Creation, in the Hindu pantheon. Though later in origin, he acquired a status equal to that of Śiva and Viṣṇu. The origin of Brahmā is a vexed question. He is not a deity among the list of the gods known to the early Vedic society. He is neither non-Āryan, in other words Drāviḍian, nor folk. He comes into the picture for the first time during the later Vedic period, acquires an important place in the pantheon and slowly becomes unpopular.

The *Cilappatikāram* (2:22: 16-102) talks about a class of gods, called *varṇabhūtas*, who were custodians of the *caturvarṇas*. When the heroine of the epic, Kaṇṇaki, is about to set fire to the city of Maturai, she first talks to the Fire God and instructs him whom not to disturb. They are "*pārppaṇar (brāhmaṇas), aṟavōr (dharmatmas), pacu* (cows), *pattiṉippeṇṭir* (chaste women), *mūttōr* (aged ones) and *kuḻavi* (children)". Those to be annihilated were *tīttiṟattār* (evil beings).[1] To quote:

> *Pārppa ṟaravōr pacuppat tiṉipeṇṭir*
> *Mūttōr kuḻavi yeṉumivaraik kaiviṭṭu*
> *Tīttiṟattār pakkamē cērka* (*Cilampu*. 2:21:53-55).

After the instruction, when the impending danger is about to hurl on the city, the exodus of the 'deities of the various castes', viz., *pārppār (brāhmaṇa), aracar (kṣatriya), vaṇikar* (*vaiṣya*) and agriculturists (*vēḷār* or *veḷḷālar*) takes place.[2] In this account we find an important clue to the origin of Brahmā through *brāhmaṇas* as a *varṇadevatā*. Neither the word *pārppaṇar* or *antaṉar* is used in the context but *vētamutalvaṉ*, an epithet of Brahmā, meaning 'first of the *Veda*'. He is also called *ātipūtam* (Ādibhūta), the *atipatikkaṭavuḷ* 'presiding God' of the *brāhmaṇas*. The text says, "Those (i.e., the *brāhmaṇas*) who possess sacrificial implements, shining like the rays of the moon, and who maintain the three vital fires (*muttī* instead of *pañcāgni*)[3] and who do not falter from the code of conduct prescribed for the priestly class by Brahmā, such of them constitute the first class of *bhūta* (viz., the *brāhmaṇa-bhūta*) ..." It may be presumed that there prevailed a concept of *varṇabhūtas* and through this source the origin of Brahmā may be traced. In other words, Brahmā is likely to have been an ideal *Brāhmaṇa* who appropriating the emblems typical of the priestly and teaching community (such as *kamaṇḍalū, akṣamālā, puṣtaka* and *yogadaṇḍa*) became the patron God of that class. During the pre-Buddhist days, the God is likely to have ascended high in the social ladder in view of the respect commanded by the *brāhmaṇas* in the society. Later, the heterodoxical sects in their system of approach did away with not only the Vedic sacrificial rituals but also the hegemony held by the priestly class in ecclesiastical affairs and perhaps it may be the reason why in the *bhakti* approach the Buddhist-Jain precedents were followed, thereby cutting short the importance attached to the Vedic rituals and their preceptors, the *brāhmaṇas*.

Being the *sṛṣṭikarta* 'creator', Brahmā was treated an ideal man who was immaculate both by thought and deed. The *Śrītattvanidhi* gives him the *saumya* character though others like *Kāśyapaśilpaśāstra* make him *rājasa*. By virtue of the character he is considered to be the most noble among the righteous, *ṛṣinamuttama*.

Brahmā was considered an ideal student who learns (*payilum maṟaiyāḷam, Tēvāram* 1:82:3) or ordains-teaches the Scripture, *mutumaṟai mutalvaṉ* (*Mani.* 13:1:94). As a creator, he not only cooks the *Vedas* but also the community of gods and goddesses, the cosmic elements, the *bhūtas* and Śiva himself. He is the one who pours the seeds into the *sṛṣṭikuṇḍa* as Hiraṇyagarbha, which is symbolically pointed out in the Kalyāṇasundaramūrti form. He is the light that leads the cosmos in its right course that is pointed out by his status as charioteer in the Tripurāntaka form. The chariot is symbolic of the cosmos in the analogy.

Brahmā's status in the society was due mainly to his erudite qualities. The respect accorded to learning and teaching is pointed out through the metaphor. He was called *Vētamutalvaṉ, mutiyavaṉ* and *Pitāmaha*. In course of time he lost his popularity, maybe due to the increasing anti-brāhmaṇical attitude in the society as a result of the initiatives taken by the Buddhist-Jain orders.[4] In the *bhakti* system a path akin to the heterodoxical method was chalked out and new myths invented to distort the personality of Brahmā. Śiva cuts his head and deprives him of his quality as an omnipresent being.

It seems there was no cult after Brahmā. The *Maṇimēkalai* notes a system of philosophy called Brahmavāda, which recognises the Hiraṇyagarbha aspect of the Lord as a Creator par excellence. According to the system of thought, Brahmā was the most important being because without creation nothing exists and all is *sūnya* 'void'. Brahmā is the one who dispels darkness and leads the cosmos in its right course.

The popularity of Brahmā should have been due to his exemplary character as a model *puruṣa* and ideal *ṛṣi*. His four faces symbolised the scriptures, the guardian of time and the guardian of *varṇāśramadharma*.[5] He fell when the basis of *varṇāśrama* was shaken.

The concept of *dikpālakas* has its roots in the worship of nature by the primitive communities. A.A. Macdonell rightly brings the Vedic gods into various types called atmospheric gods, terrestrial gods, celestial gods and so on. The Tamil system of approach to Indra and Varuṇa as gods of two of the landed divisions of the country is a good case in consideration to point out social values. *Marutam* is a type of land that looks at the sky for its fertility. If there is no rain, there is no cultivation. For *marutam* dwellers Indra, the god of rains, was the *iṣṭadevata*. The Festival of Indra takes place only in the Cōḷa country,[6] the granary of the South, wherein *marutam* type of land predominates. The god in course of time lost his status due to an incest with Ahalyā. He is supposed to have 1,000 eyes, the eye being a euphemistic term for the vulva. It seems to be a purāṇic invention as an invocation to a God of eminence with the epithet *sahasrākṣa* 'thousand eyed' is not uncommon. Devī in Tamil tradition is invoked with the epithet, *āyiraṅkaṇṇuṭaiyāḷ* 'thousand eyed one'.[7] What was originally an epithet of the God of Rain seems to have been later transformed into a metaphor for vituperative vocabulary in respect of Indra.

Varuṇa was the God of the high seas who controlled the wind and weather. He was made god of *neytal* in the Tamil tradition. His worship was symbolically undertaken by planting the tooth of a shark on the sea-shore. He was the patron god of fishermen who went to the mid-seas for a harvest of fishes. The fisherwomen, waiting on shore pray to the Sea God for the safe voyage of their men-folk. The folk believed an offering to Varuṇa would not only protect their adventurers in the seas but also assure a rich catch of fish.

Agni was respected by the society. He was one who burnt down evil and established righteousness. It seems by about the time of the *Cilappatikāram* marriages in the Tamil country were conducted according to the Vedic rituals to be witnessed by *agni*. Kaṇṇaki and Kōvalaṉ are said to have been married according to the rituals directed by a *brāhmaṇa* and by going around the fire in circumambulation. To quote:

> *Māmutu pārppāṉ maṟaivaḻi kāṭṭiṭat*
> *Tīvalam ceytu* ... (*Cilampu*, 1:1: 52-3).[8]

In folk tradition, invoking a deity to bear witness to an event is very common. Agni seems to have commanded such a status in society. The *Cilappatikāram* bears evidence to the custom in another context. When Kaṇṇaki resolves to destroy Madurai, she summons Agni to her presence. He is ordered to destroy the city, maybe with a view to purify it as Śrī Rāma had done in case of Sītā in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The Vedic belief was that Agni purifies the offering and carries it to the gods. He was like a vehicle, the chariot.[9] The idea is better cast in the *Kumārasaṁbhava*. Here, Agni carries Śiva's fiery seeds and deposits them in *ākāśa-gaṅgā*.

The place of Yama in the social plane was more of a villainous type. He was called *Kūṟṟu* in Tamil, 'fate' in a wicked sense. All evils falling on the head of an individual were attributed to fate. Kōvalaṉ, the hero of *Cilappatikāram*, meets a goldsmith who was the messenger of Fate, Kūṟṟattūtaṉ, who seals his destiny that results in the former's untimely and unjustful murder. Yama's emblems were the *kāladaṇḍa* 'staff of time' and *kālapāśa* 'noose of time'. Yama judges one's activities during his life span and accords him judgement. He uses the *pāśa* to snatch away the life of a person. The illustration in Cave XV of Ellora is a good theme on the subject.

The *dikpālakas* were to begin with four. There is a reference to *nāṟperunteyvam* 'four great deities' in *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*. In course of time, the sub-regions were assigned regents and in the process few of the local deities or folk ones were listed among them. Īśāna was an equal of Lord Śiva. He became one among the five Mūrtis of the Sadāśiva form. In early stages he seems to have been among the *dikpālakas*. He is *trinetra* and *nandi* is his vehicle. According to the *Śrītattvanidhi*, Īśāna is equal to Parameśvara. Later in the hymns of the Nāyaṉmār all the eight came to be identified with Śiva. According to Cuntarar, Śiva is the eye of the eight directions, *eṇṭicaikkum-kaṇ*. It was believed that the regents of the directions, the *dikpālakas*, served as *lokapālas* 'protector of the world' which epithet kings of the age took. For example, the Pikira grant of Siṁhavarmaṉ Pallava calls him the fifth *lokapālaka* in addition to Yama, Kubera, Varuṇa and Indra. The text is: *lokapālānam pañcamasya* (*EI*, VIII: 161).[10]

Sūrya was one who dispelled darkness and poured light into the cosmos. In Tamil he is called *paṉippakaivaṉ* (*Mani.* 25:180) 'enemy of mist'. He is one who removes the mist of evil and assures the light of righteousness. His status in the society was akin to that of Agni. Sūrya, Candra and Agni were supposed to be the *trinetra* of gods like Śiva and Devī. Sūrya was considered to be a witness to the happenings in the world and thus Kaṇṇaki invites his report on the murder of her innocent husband. The Sun retorts saying that Kōvalaṉ was not guilty.

It was firmly believed that the proper rotation of the planets was essential for the well being of the world, good rains and a rich harvest. The *Maṇimēkalai* (7: 11.8-10) talks about this eloquently:

Kōlnilai tirintiṭiṟ kōḷnilaitiriyum
Kōḷnilai tirintiṭin mārivaṟaṅkūrum
Mārivaṟaṅ kūriṉ maṉṉuyiri llai.

Everything rests with good administration. If the king's sceptre reigns properly, everything will be allright. If the sceptre stoops, the planetary movements falter from their ways, which means the failure of rains and the suffering of humanity. So, the society deified the planets and offered them their due. The Nāyaṉmār include a special type of hymn called *Kōḷarupatikam*, a decad in praise of the planets, soliciting their blessings.

The *Kṣetrapālakas* were much respected and considered guardians of cultures. They were *nigrahamūrtis* who guard a sacred temple from evil beings. The status of *Dvārapālakas* was akin to their counterparts, the *Kṣetrapālakas*. Their value in a temple is beautifully pointed out in the *Tiruppāvai*, part of the Tamil Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* literature. According to the text the *kōyilkāppāṉ* 'Kṣetrapālaka (?)' and *vāyilkāppāṉ* '*dvārapālaka*' are to examine whether the devotees had come pure by heart and deed and then allow them entry into the temple. The text adds,

Nāyakanāy niṉṟa nantakōpaṉuṭaiya
kōyilkāppāṉē koṭittōṉṟam tōraṇa
vāyilkāppāṉē maṇikkatavam tāḻtiṟavāy ...
tūyōmāy vantōm tuyileḻappāṭuvāṉ
vāyālmuṉṉamuṉṉam māṟṟātē yammānī
nēyanilaikkatavam nīkkēlōrempāvāy (*Tiruppāvai* 16).

In the hymn we find the *Kṣetrapālakas* and *Dvārapālakas* juxtaposed and treated as guardians of the temple culture in its restricted circle.[11]

Some of the deities were treated malivolous. The *aṇaṅku* in Tamil tradition is one among them. The *Maṇimēkalai* uses the expression, *tākku aṇaṅku* 'the spirit which attacks'. The victims were mostly innocent wayfarers. The *Cilappatikāram* talks of one *Kāṉuraiteyvam* 'deity residing the mid-forest' who attempts to cajole Kōvalaṉ during his journey from Pukār to Maturai. Kōvalaṉ utters the *mantras* in praise of Devī-Koṟṟavai and casts away the spell. The *vidyādharas* were considered to be evil ones who kidnapped young girls roaming alone. Another type of *vidyādharas* were jealous of young men and killed them. The hero of *Maṇimēkalai*, called Udayakumaraṉ, who falls in love with Maṇimēkalai, is killed by a *vidyādhara*.

People had faith in spirits, inhabiting posts. The *Maṇimēkalai* talks of a goddess called Kantirpāvai, *kantu* meaning a post. She is able to tell the past, the history of one's previous birth and the future. There were oracles. The *Cilappatikāram* talks of a goddess-possessed girl, called Cāliṉi, who is decorated like Koṟṟavai and pronounces oracles (*Cilampu*. 2:12). Similarly, Vēlaṉ is one who is possessed by Murukaṉ and performs *veṟiyāṭṭam* 'orgiastic dances'.

Brought within the frame of a sculptural portrayal none of the minor deities and Brahmā express any of the *rasas*, the basic ingredient in Indian aesthetics. Brahmā is always benign in *sattva* or *rājasa* attitude and never engaged in any of the heroic adventure that Śiva, Viṣṇu and Śakti undertake. In this respect the latter gods are very dynamic than Brahmā, Gaṇapati, Skanda and the minor deities. The only exception in respect of Brahmā is Brahmaśirascchedakamūrti (Kailāsa of Kāñci) wherein the Lord exhibits emotions of an entirely different character. In all other illustrations, he is full of compassion and love for humanity. In the Elephanta type of Trimūrti, the Brahmabhāga shows the tender feelings of a mother. Among the aesthetically remarkable works are the images found in Hucchapayya and Kont-*guḍis* at Aihole, Tiruccirāppaḷḷi lower cave and the Tirumalaipuram cave temple.

Among the *dikpālakas*, images of Indra in the Arjuna-*ratha* at Māmallapuram and the *façade* of Kailāsa at Ellora are noteworthy pieces. The *dvārapālakas* of Elephanta, Ellora (Caves XV, XVI-River Goddesses chapel, and *Ḍumārleṇa*), Alampūr and Māmallapuram (Koṇēri-*maṇḍapam* and Draupadī-*ratha*) are classical impressions.

CONSOLIDATION

The impact of sociological notions on the formation of art is explicitly related to the origin of Brahmā. The fact that neither the Drāviḍians of the Indus culture nor the *Ṛg* Vedic Āryans had any idea of Brahmā, and that he emerges into the picture during the later Vedic times would guide us to hypothesise that the origin of the God should be in an idea vaguely suggested by a later text like the *Cilappatikāram*. The same text talking about a kind of philosophy that revolved around the Creator-God would help the generalization that Brahmā was the God of the *brāhmaṇas* whose attributes and ethos he absorbs. Having got a hold over the society, he thrived as long as the Vedic-brāhmaṇical and religious notions held sway over the society. When it was questioned, as a result of the initiatives taken by the heterodoxical sects, headed by *kṣatriya* leaders and as a result of state patronage, and the support extended by the mercantile class who must have resented the superior position held by the *brāhmaṇas*, Brahmavāda as it is called in *Maṇimēkalai* fell into oblivion. The God, Brahmā continued to exist as a subordinate factor within the Trinity.

Brahmā being one in charge of the creative function, he is always benign and merciful. He is neither ferocious nor dynamic, dynamism in the sense of a destructive function. He is leader of the anchorites and as a creator and guardian of *varṇāśramadharma* maintains his respectable place in the society. Inscriptions (e.g. Maṇṭakappaṭṭu and Bhairavakoṇḍa) talk about the Trimūrtis, give him the first place, the place of priority that he maintains in the order and organisation of a temple, a good example is the Moghulrājapuram Cave II wherein the triple houses meant for the Trinity begin with the cella of Brahmā as pointed out by the bust of his image, carved atop the *façade* section. All images of Brahmā within the area of our study show the Lord in *saumya* or *rājasa* character and make him an aesthetically enjoyable subject.

The minor deities of the pantheon have their own roots in the sociological notions of the age. They represent a conglomeration of Drāviḍian, Āryan and aboriginal elements as pointed out by the different *vāhanas*, attributed to them. These *vāhanas*, mostly birds or animals and the corpse, are likely to have been totemistic emblems of the primitive tribes. The interaction of the higher religions with the mass native population resulted in certain adjustments by which the native elements were absorbed by accommodating their basic traits into the higher religious practices. The *purāṇas* and *itihāsas* dealing with the story of *garuḍa* and Hanumat, the monkey hero, would support the process of assimilation very much. *Garuḍa* is said to have been defeated by Viṣṇu in a combat whom he requests to be his mount, which is accepted by the bird. It is to prove the absorption of a tribe of *garuḍas* whose totemic emblem was the kite who mingle with the Hindu mainstream. We have several others; for example the bull, peacock, lion, elephant, fish (*makara*) and so on. The chronological framework of the process of interaction is likely to be 1000 B.C. to A.D. 400. The foundations of the newly forming *sanmatas* (*aṟuvakaiccamayam*) with all their paraphernalia, the minor deities, were laid by about A.D. 850 after which the process of consolidation takes place.

REFERENCES

1. *Tī* 'fire' means also the evil being. So *tī* (*agni*) is that which destroys the evil, purifies the matter and brings out the immaculate one from the possession of evil. *Infra* for more arguments.
2. The *caturvarṇas* of the *Dharmaśāstras* are *brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiṣya* and *sūdra*. Their Tamil equivalents are *pārppaṇar, aracar, vaṇikar* 'merchants' and *vēḷār* 'serfs'. It is according the *Cilappatikāram*, discussed in the foregoing account. In an earlier text, the *Tolkāppiyam* (*Poruḷatikāram* vv. 32, 142), the four (*aracar, antaṉar, vaṇikar* and *veḷḷāḷar*) are noted, the *kṣatriya* pushed to the forefront of the cadre. See Raju Kalidos, "Communalism in Retrospect: Problems and Perspectives", *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Vol. LXXVI: 3-4, 1985, pp. 231-32; C.E. Ramachandran, *Ahanānūṟu in its Historical Setting*, pp. 58-59.
3. It refers to the five vital fires that *brāhmaṇas* are expected to keep latent always at their residence and workshop, lest he misses his status as a member of the priestly class.
4. The Buddhist-Jain literature gives preference to *kṣatriya* over the *brāhmaṇa* in its approach to *varṇāśrama* (*vide*, Raju Kalidos. *loc. cit*). It may have its own sinister motives because both the finders of Buddhism and Jainism were *kṣatriyas*. The final goal was to cut at the root of brāhmaṇical monopoly in the society. In this respect the *Tolkāppiyam* version is quite interesting, which reiterates the Buddhist ideology for the first time in the Tamil country.
5. Raju Kalidos, "Yoninilayā-Concept and Application in South Indian Art", *East and West*, Vol. 40: 1-4, p. 128. Devī in the *Lalitāsahasranāma* is called *kularūpinī* (epithet No. 897) as guardian of *varṇāśramadharma*.
6. Both the epics which describe the *Intiraviḻā* set the scene in Pukār or Kāvirippūmpaṭṭiṇam, the port-city and second metropolis of the Cōḻas, and not either Vañci (Cēra capital) or Maturai (Pāṇḍya capital). Temples of *vacciram* (*vajra*) and *veḷyāṉai* 'white elephant' (Airāvata) are associated with Pukār.
7. Raju Kalidos, *loc. cit.*, p. 124.
8. The *brāhmaṇa*, called *maṟaiyaṉ,antaṇaṉ, vētiyaṉ* and so on, is called *pārppāṉ* 'one who sees (a book and is engaged in reading all the time)' in the context and earlier (*supra, Cilampu.* 2:21:53).
9. Cf. the *Ṛg Veda* which calls him *rathir adhvaranam*, the car which carries the oblations to the gods. H.H.Wilson, *Rig Veda Saṁhita*, Vol. I, p. 119; see also Raju Kalidos, *Temple Cars of Medieval Tamiḻaham*, p. 7.
10. The *varṇadevates*, discussed earlier (*supra*), may be equated as follows: *brāhmaṇa*-Brahmā, *kṣatriya*-Śiva and *vaiṣya*-Viṣṇu. This may be one of the reasons why most of the Indian ruling families erected temples in honour of Śiva. The early medieval period in itself is a good example wherein most of the temples are of Śaiva denomination.
11. The importance of *Tiruppāvai* in religious studies has been elaborated by the author in the article, "The Tamil Concept of *bhakti* with special reference of Tiruppāvai", part vol. I.

Conclusion

From Elephanta-Ellora in Upper Deccan to Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam-Tirumalaipuram in the Far South a cavalcade of images on Brahmā and the minor deities come to light. These images add immense colouring to the dimensions of iconology. These images do not operate in an isolated circle but form part of a big movement that add to the heritage of Indian art and deserves to be proudly recorded on its palimpsest. The Trimūrti of Elephanta, the Somaskandamurti of Māmallapuram, the *Dikpālakas* of Elephanta, the *Kṣetrapālakas* of Alampūr,the Trimūrti cave of Moghulrājapuram with its bust of the Trinity and the Indra of Arjuna-*ratha* in Māmallapuram are masterpieces, which add to the rhythm of artistic integration in South India. The Pallavas, Pāṇḍyas, Cāḷukyas and Rāṣṭrakūṭas though competitors on the political arena were makers of a pan-Indian religious art.

The panorama of art, presented by the minor deities and Brahmā, is a conglomeration of Dravidian, Āryan and folk elements. Under the present state of knowledge, it is difficult to earmark how many were the minor deities who formed part of the religious culture of the Dravidian-Indus. It is not known whether the later-Vedic Brahmā had any link with the Yogamūrti of the Indus seals though scholars unanimously associate him with Yogīśvara-Śiva, the prototype of later Dakṣiṇāmūrti. The new idea about the Indus culture is that there was a caste-based society, which tempts a scholar to think of *varṇadevatas* in the Harappan context that the Drāviḍian epic, the *Cilappatikāram*, talks about. The interaction between the Drāviḍian and Āryan cultures that provided the basis for a pan-Indian civilization in course of time drew within its fold the several aboriginal or folk elements as it has been proved by the cavalcade of *vāhanas* that the Hindu deities came to possess by about the 9th century A.D.

The Buddhist-Jain religious experiment and its visual expression in the art of India after the 3rd century B.C. has had a profound impact over the *bhakti* cult, which strived to meet the needs of the common man and thoroughly revamped the pantheon by about the 6th century A.D. Thus, several of the minor deities like *dvārapālakas, vidyādharas, apsarase, sālabhañjikas, maithuna* motifs and so on have their roots in Buddhist art. The eyes that are familiar with the decorative motifs in Buddhist temples at Sāñchi, Ajaṇṭa, Junāgāḍ, Kārla, Beḍsa and Bhāje are able to identify the originals and their later imitation. Though textual sources of the Hindus assign antiquity to many of the idioms in art and their god-forms, the non-availability of archaeological sources lay the weightage on the Jain-Bhuddhist legacy and the indebtedness of the Hindu arts since about the 5th century A.D., starting with the Gupta-Udayagiri, to the prototype available in heterodoxical centres.

Among the available sources, the *Vedas* and their *aṅgas* provide a long list of the deities familiar with the Āryan by about the middle of the second millennium B.C. We find Indra, Agni, Varuṇa, Yama, Aditi, the *Aśvins*, Āryaman, Savitṛ, Mitra, Dyaus, Sūrya, Pūṣan, Viṣṇu, Vivasvat, Uṣas, Rudra, the Maruts, Vāyu, Bṛhaspati "domestic priest", Soma, Dhātṛ, Tvaṣṭṛ, Viśvakarma, Prajāpati, Ditī, Pṛthvī, Rātrī, Vāc, Puraṁdhi "goddess of activity", Pṛṣṇi (mother of Maruts), Varuṇānī, Agnāyī, Ādityas, Vasus, Ṛbhus, *Apsarase, gandharvas, ṛṣis* and so on. Scholars, e.g. A.A. Macdonell, have classified them under different types and pointed out their significance within the Vedic pantheon and the reformed church of the later *bhakti* times. Many of the gods like Indra, Mitra, Agni and others who held a preeminent status during the pre-Buddhist days lost their place in course of time. Gods of lesser denomination such as Viṣṇu in his Trivikrama aspect, Rudra and others were pushed to the forefront. By about A.D. 500 a new world of religious tradition emerges in the Indian subcontinent that presents a composite picture of Drāviḍian, Āryan and aboriginal cultures. Among the great gods of the new order was Brahmā. He was ordainer of the cosmos, the community of gods and goddesses, including Śiva, the Prajāpatis 'progenitors of human race', the *ṛṣis* and the forces of nature. The Brahmavādas believed that the cosmos was the creation of Brahmā who hatched it through the egg laid by him. The Milky Way is circumscribed within the Cosmic *aṇḍa* 'egg' and so Brahmā was the Hiraṇyagarbha. Śiva and Viṣṇu being the main competitors, Brahmā seems to have exploited the situation to maintain his first place in the order of the Trinity. Whether it is the Śaiva or Vaiṣṇava, the first place goes to Brahmā in ranking members of the Trinity. But, he was a *de jure* sovereign, a King-in-parliament, the final decisions being taken by either Viṣṇu or Śiva. Whenever Śiva and Brahmā are in trouble due to the boons that they sanction to demons, it is Viṣṇu who comes to their rescue by virtue of his quick-wittedness.

Beginning with the *Vedas*, the textual material bearing on Brahmā and the minor deities are available in a number of *purāṇas*. The myths related to the gods and their epithets are traceable in them. The Tamil sources, beginning with the Caṅkam works and the Twin epics present interesting details with regard to the cult, the manner of worship, the temples, rituals, common beliefs and the iconographical attributes. The Tamil sources provide hints regarding the origin of gods like Brahmā. Directional deities like Indra and Varuṇa receive a fair degree of treatment and the data so obtained presents a cross cultural perspective. The *bhakti* movement in Tamil Nadu has bequeathed a rich corpus of literature in which Brahmā and the minor deities find their due share as subordinate gods. We find a god like Indra who was one among the most important gods of the Vedic pantheon and the presiding god of a landed division in Tamil Nadu during the cultural epoch of an earlier time transformed into a minor deity. When once they lost their status, there was no chance for revival and regeneration afterwards.

The *bhakti* movement was the major factor in deciding the development of temple culture and formulation of iconographical typologies. Brahmā and the minor deities were petrified iconographically at one point of time. With the result, we find Brahmā either in seated or standing aspects, the mount and iconographical attributes being of a stereotyped pattern. A pan-Indian unity of thought is found in this respect from Elephanta in the west to Tirumalaipuram in the deep south. The minor gods and attendants are of the same denomination. *Dvārapākas, vidyādharas, apsarase, garuḍa, nandi*, and others are almost the same and appear in the same garb with few regional variations.

In spite of the unity of thought, each and every region has its own quota of contribution. Brahmā is a common factor while the *dikpālakas* are random factors found present only in the Upper and Lower Deccan. The *Nidhis* are random factors. Others like *dvārapālakas, apsarase, vidyādharas, ṛṣis, nandi, nāga* and *garuḍa* are common factors. But certain regional developments in respect of *garuḍa* and *nāga* are found in the Lower Deccan. In Tamil Nadu, Varuṇa and Indra became very important deities at one point of time and lost their values during the early medieval period.

The iconography of Brahmā subscribes to some common factors within the area and period of study. The Lord is uniformly *trimukha, caturbhuja* and seated or standing. If seated, the goose serves him as a mount and in both seated and *sthānaka* forms the *padmapīṭha* is provided. The emblems are mostly *akṣamālā, kamaṇḍalū, puṣtaka, yogadaṇḍa* and *padma*. Endowed with these *lakṣaṇas* few of the masterpieces are found in Elephanta, Ellora (Caves XVI, XVII and XXI), Aihole (Hucchapayya and Kont-*guḍis*), Tiruccirāppaḷḷi and Tirumalaipuram. The *trikūṭa* pattern found in Ellora (Caves XV, XVII and XXV), Tiruccirāppaḷḷi and Tirumalaipuram stand proof of the value attached to the God of Creation in the religious history of the times. Being a member of the Trimūrti cult, the place of Brahmā is stressed in the tricellar cave temples and the inscriptions of the age from Maṇṭakappaṭṭu and Bhairavakoṇḍa. The iconographical evidences of the Moghulrājapuram cave, though miniatures, are unique in this respect.

The contribution of Upper Deccan is manifold. Brahmā appears independently in several instances and is set against the background of *trikūṭa* type of temple format that assign him a status of equality with other members of the Trinity. The Elephanta and Maṇḍapeśvara caves are unique for including Brahmā and the *dikpālakas* among other iconographical types who fail to appear in other zones, excepting perhaps Ellora. The *dikpālakas* appear in huge numbers and though not independent, they add another dimension to the subject. The specimen set at the *façade* level of the Kailāsa in Ellora are unique and find no parallel in other parts of the South. *Dvārapālakas, vidyādharas* and other attendant gods receive a better treatment at the hands of the artists of the Upper Deccan.

Though the Cāḷukyas and Rāṣṭrakūṭas were masters of the entire region from the Narmadā southwards, certain regional factors are to be found in and around Badāmī. Brahmā for example appears on the ceiling, aligned with the other two among the Trimūrtis. The *dikpālakas* not only appear in ceiling panels but are grouped together as fitted in the regions meant for them. *Garuḍa* and *Nāga* are themes that receive a new deal with the Cāḷukyan artists in the Lower Deccan. Ādiśeṣa appearing in the coiled aspect is one of the marvels of the age. Similarly, *Garuḍa* appears atop the doorframe having in his clutches several snakes. Here the *nāga* is an ornament of *garuḍa* and an object of his food. There is a reference of Kantirpāvay, the goddess of the post, in ancient literature but no archaeological evidence is traceable. In this respect the *staṁbhas* found in front of the *Rāvulaphaḍi* cave at Aihole and the Kailāsa in Ellora are to be kept in mind. These provide the model for later *mānasthaṁbas* in Karṇāṭaka.

The Far South has contributed its own quota from Māmallapuram in the north to Tirumalaipuram in the south. It is indeed very strange that no evidence of Brahmā is to be found in the cave temples of Kerala. The Tamil literary tradition from the beginning of the Christian era has accorded importance to Brahmā and the minor deities. Many of the facts presented down to the pre-Pallava time as recorded in the *Maṇimēkalai* and *Cilappatikāram*, are historically interesting. The five-fold classification of the land, Indra and Varuṇa as guardian deities of two among the *tiṇais*, the details relating to minor deities and folk beliefs centering around these gods and goddesses are interesting. But the picture by about the 7th century A.D. changes completely. We no longer hear of the Festival of Indra or any temple for him. Not even a single representation of Varuṇa is to be found in any of the Pallava or Pāṇḍya cave temples. Even Sūrya who is so greatly admired in the *Cilappatikāram* fails to receive any significant representation. Many of the local deities had lost their place in the Tamil society by about the 7th century A.D. How are we to explain this phenomenon? Is it due to the Kaḷabhra interregnum or the *bhakti* movement of the Āḻvārs and Nāyaṉmār? It may tentatively be suggested that the Kaḷabhras should have played a role in doing away with the local cults and thereby introducing Buddhism and Jainism. The revival of Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism in the 6th century A.D. did not bother much about the status of the minor deities. They were subordinated to the main gods.

EPILOGUE

A Tailpiece to the Four-Volume Series

The voice generated by the chisels and hammers of the Mauryan artists at Barābar for scooping out cave temples reverberated over the entire subcontinent for more than a millennium since the 3rd century B.C. The *stūpas, vihāras* and *staṁbhas* erected by the Aśokan stone-cutters and masons provided the guidelines for the coming generation of artists in Western India. Nearly 1,500 cave temples were worked out, which spread over a vast area from Junāgāḍ in the West to Udayagiri-Khaṇḍagiri in the East, Barabar (U.P.) in the North to Viḻiñam in the Far South. Most of these monuments are concentrated in Mahārāshtra and dedicated to gods of the Buddhists, Jains and the Hindus. Junāgāḍ, Ellora, Ajaṇṭa, Nāśik, Kanheri, Udayagiri (M.P.), Udayagiri-Khaṇḍagiri (Orissa), Moghulrājapuram, Bhairavakoṇḍa and Māmallapuram are few of the places wherein a continuous array of cave temples of solid dimension are found. The architectural and iconographical masterpieces embedded in these centres of art constitute a world of their own.

During the early medieval period that follows 300 years after the fall of the Sātavāhanas, the Cāḷukyas of Badāmī, the Pallavas of Kāñci, the Pāṇḍyas of Maturai, the Eastern Cāḷukyas of Veṅgi and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of Mānyakheṭa took up the reins in their hands and were custodians of South Indian polity. Kāñcīpuram occupied an important place in the cultural network of the then times. The Kadamba king, Mayūraśarma, is said to have visited Kāñci in disguise to quench his thirst for knowledge. The Nālanda University in the North invited a professor from Kāñci to be its chancellor. The Chinese pilgrim, Hieun Tsang, visited Kāñci, having come to know about its splendour. The principal competitors in political matters were the Pallavas of Kāñci and the Western Cāḷukyas of Badāmī, which led to lot of interactions, both political and cultural.

The *bhakti* cult that had its genesis in Sanskritic sources such as the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Harivaṁśa* and *Bhagavatgīta* cut across the Vindhyan barrier and moved into the Drāviḍa country by about A.D. 500. The socio-religious awakening of the Buddhist-Jains had their impacts imprinted on the revival of the Hindu sects through the *bhakti* medium. The flowering of a classical art took place in Central India at Udayagiri, near Sāñchi. The images of Varāhamūrti, Nṛsiṁha, Mahiṣāsuramardinī, Śeṣaśāyī, Skanda and several others set the model for the later impressions at Elephanta, Ellora, Jogeśvarī, Badāmī, Paṭṭadakkal, Aihole, Alampūr, Bhairavakoṇḍa, Māmallapuram and Kāñcīpuram. By way of Kaḻukumalai these idioms went as for an Viḻiñam and Irunilamkōḍu and found hills transformed into lithic tablets in a classical format.

The great saga of sculptural tradition represents a composite culture, crystallised by Drāviḍo-Āryan admixture from the racial point of view, bringing within its manifold garb several linguistic groups. Sanskrit and Tamil were highly developed at that time. The *vikrities* were at a rudimentary stage of development but Prākrit and Pāli were the basis for Buddhist-Jain literary activity. These two heterodoxical sects pointed out a new direction in religious experiments. First of all, they opposed the sacrificial system of the Vedic religion. Secondly, they taught and spoke to the people through folk dialects like Prākrit. They resisted caste-based social organisation and cut at the root of brāhmaṇical monopoly in religious matters. The depressed communities and the proletariat found solace in the new religious set up. Matters continued likewise till the advent of the Guptas who imbibing the Buddhist-Jain ideas of reformation, sowed the seeds of the neo-*bhakti* cult.

Śaivism, Viṣṇuism, Śaktism, Gāṇapatya and Kaumāra sects found chances for a revival under the Guptas. The Udayagiri caves bear evidences of the efflorescence. There are temples for Śiva, Viṣṇu (Śeṣaśāyī and Varāhamūrti), Skanda, Gaṇapati, the Mātṛkas and several other manifestations of Viṣṇu like Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa and Nṛsiṁha. Under the new system, caste was not totally abolished but rejected theoretically. A new social formation was taking place through *purāṇas, dharmaśāstras, āgamas, śilpa* texts and the like. Vedic Sanskrit underwent changes and a new language, called classical Sanskrit, found its epoch-making creations through the writings of Kālidāsa, Sūdraka, Bhāravi, Daṇḍi and several others. All these stood in support of the newly evolving society and religion. *Bhakti* and temple arts were the basis of a new organisation.

The literary excellence and architectural glory, born in Ujjain and Udayagiri, attained their maturity in the South after A.D. 550. *Bhakti* literature and philosophy reached the acme of their evolution through the medium of Tamil. The Āḻvārs and Nāyaṉmār were the prime-movers of the new cult. The neo-norms in art expressed themselves in the caves of the Upper and Lower Deccan and its southern outpost at Māmallapuram. In its historical course *bhakti* had its centre geographically shifted from the North to the Far South and linguistically from Sanskrit to Tamil. As guardians of the change, the Pallavas, Pāṇḍyas, Cāḷukyas, Rāṣṭrakūṭas and the minor potentates who were competitors after a *dikvijaya* became adventists of a *dharmavijaya*.

Architecture and sculpture do not operate within an isolated world. They are born in religion, nurtured by philosophy and exalted in society. After A.D. 500 the Āḻvārs and Nāyaṉmār were the masterminds behind all religious thinking. Their soul-stirring hymns touched the hearts of the folk, lit the torch of devotion and brought back rulers of the land from heterodoxical faiths to Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. They were the founders of a new era of religious upheaval and artistic revolution. Their ideas spread far and wide and had a tremendous influence over the ideologies of medieval India.

The voyage which began at Udayagiri spread over the Deccan and moved into the Far South. The catchment zone was Upper Deccan wherein the majority of the caves are scattered on the Satpūra hills, noted for its supple basalt type of volcanic rock that could be tamed easily so that mammoth temples like the Kailāsa are possible. In the lower Deccan a new type of rock, red sandstone, made easier the stone cutting process. Structural temples in the Deccan are to be found in Badāmī, Mahākūṭa, Paṭṭadakkal and Aihole. The eastern extension of the tradition goes up to Alampūr in the Kṛṣṇā basin. We find here the *rekha-nāgara* type dominating and the *drāviḍa* presenting a negligible proportion. The *drāviḍa-vimāna* had its long-standing impact on the art of Ellora in its Kailāsa. Structural temples in the Far South are mostly concentrated in Kāñcīpuram and Māmallapuram. Sporadically, these peep upto Tirunelvēli in the Far South.

Under a new religio-philosophical spell, the temples were set against the backdrop of ecological beauty. Elephanta on the high sea, Māmallapuram surrounded by the bay and water reservoirs, Alampūr where the Tuṅgabhadrā and Kṛṣṇā find a confluence, Bhairavakoṇḍa amidst a dense forest, Paṭṭadakkal and Aihole on the banks of the Malaprabhā river, Takli Ḍhokeśvara on top of a dry hill, Ḍumārleṇa at the base of a waterfalls and Badāmī set against a picturesque scenary bear eloquent testimony to the choice of a venue for building temples. There should have been a symbol behind the choice of natural resorts for erecting a house of worship. Wherever you see, it is the beauty of ultimate reality. Whatever you hear, it is the divine rhythm of cosmic integration and not the cry of humanity, tossed in worldly affairs. A thing of beauty, in whatever form one visualizes, is a joy for ever, it is the form of Śakti; the colours of the seven seas are her manifold reflections.

Elephanta, Jogeśvarī and the *Ḍumārleṇa* are the architectural and iconographical summits in the Deccan. The *Ḍumārleṇa* measure 140' x 193 x 16.6' feet by length, breadth and height. In its breadth-wise expansion, the cave is approximately equal to the height of the Rājarājeśvaram, the *Dakṣiṇameru* of Tañcāvūr. A cave supported by twenty massive pillars, it has been estimated that not less than 4,48,000 square feet of rock was hewn out in the process of excavating the mammoth temple. In Ellora alone there are 34 caves (13 Buddhist, 16 Hindu and 5 Jain). Of them the biggest undertaking is the Kailāsa, Cave XVI, including its monolithic shrine. On the basis of the example provided by the *Ḍumārleṇa* one may estimate the quantum of work done in Ellora. There are several such examples; to mention a few Ajaṇṭa, Nāśik, Bhaje, Beḍsa, Kārla, Kanheri and so on. One may imagine the total output of stone cutting work in Western India. The *Ḍumārleṇa* consists of six *bas reliefs* of solid dimension. There are nine in Elephanta and several more in Jogeśvarī. Each and every frame of sculptural composition in these caves occupies an area of 20' x 20' feet. In the *Ḍumārleṇa* and Elephanta alone the presence of Śiva is projected on a rocky surface of 6,000 square feet. The classical impressions worked out are Trimūrti, Andhakārī-Gajasaṁhāramūrti, Kalyāṇasundaramūrti, 'Dice Game', Naṭarāja and Yogīśvara. All of them constitute a rich heritage through the plastic medium and philosophically kindle the imagination of the spectator. Race, country, language, caste and creed may differ but one who considers Godhood beyond narrow barriers sure finds the Cosmic principle perpetually residing in these solitary caves.

The marvel of the Elephanta and Ellora (no. XXIX) caves, is the Liṅga-*pīṭha*. Guarded by cyclopean *dvārapālakas* who pose like the Trivikrama, measuring the three worlds, the Lord's aniconic form appears within the precincts of a *sarvatobhadra* shrine. If the macrocosmic cave itself is an *aṇḍa* 'cosmos', is the Lord, Guḥyeśvara, a *piṇḍa* 'lump'? it is indeed a thought provoking representation. Is the *aṇḍa* 'cosmos' in *piṇḍa* 'lump' or the *piṇḍa* in *aṇḍa*? his is a shape beyond all philosophical speculations. His image is a sculptured-lump.

The temples in Upper Deccan are almost caves. They consist of two main types called *sāndhāra* and *nirandhara*, the former providing for a circumambulatory passage and the latter not so. They are of huge dimension, mostly of the *maṇḍapa* type; the cella being fitted with one or more frontal pavilions, supported by massive pillars. The cellae are guarded by *dvārapālakas* of solid shape and the walls of the *maṇḍapas* decorated with a cavalcade of iconographical typologies relating to Śiva, Viṣṇu, Devī, Gaṇapati, Skanda, Sūrya and the minor-attendant deities.

The manifestations of Śiva present in the caves of the Upper Deccan are Trimūrti, Yogīśvara, Vṛṣabhavāhanamūrti, Kalyāṇasundaramūrti, 'Dice Game', Naṭarāja, Gaṅgādharamūrti, Liṅgodbhavamūrti, Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti, Andhakārī, Ardhanārīśvara, Lakulīśa, Caṇḍikeśvara, Pāśupatāstramūrti, Bhikṣāṭanamūrti, Tripurāntakamūrti, Kālasaṁhāramūrti, Vīrabhadra, Kāla and Aghoramūrti. Totally 125 specimens and 24 iconographical variables are on record of which only one, Trimūrti, appears within the four walls of the *garbhagṛha* in the Ellora caves. Among the various forms of Viṣṇu are *Sthānaka*-Viṣṇu, Śeṣaśāyī, Garuḍārūḍa (Karivarada), Bhūvarāhamūrti, Nṛsiṁha slaying Hiraṇya, Nṛsiṁha-Hiraṇya *yuddhaṁ*. Trivikrama-Vāmana, Kṛṣṇa-Kāliyamardana, Govardhanadhāri, Balarāma, *Rāmāyaṇa* episodes (e.g. Vāli-Sugrīva *yuddham* and Sītāpaharaṇa), Ekānaṁśa and so on. Totally 61 specimens and 16 iconographical variables are present of which none appears in *garbhagṛha*. Important aspects of Devī are Mahiṣāsuramardinī, Sapta (or Aṣṭa) Mātṛkas, Sarasvatī, Gajalakṣmī, Kālī, Yoninilayā (-Padmavaktrakā), Subhadrā, Gaṅgā, Yamunā and so on. Totally 57 specimens and 15 iconographical variables are present. Among them two (Yoninilayā and Sapta Mātṛkas) appear in *garbhagṛhas*. Gaṇapati, Skanda and Brahmā are in seated and standing postures. Gaṇapati appears in the cella in few of the centres whereas others do not. The cavalcade of minor deities like *dvārapālakas*, *aṣṭadikpālakas*, *vidyādharas, apsarase* and several others make their presence in a way unparallaled in the art of early medieval South India when compared with other zones.

Travelling twenty hours southwards from Ellora, one reaches the metropolis of Cāḷukyan art, Badāmī, founded by Pulakeśi II and conquered by Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ I. There is a chain of hill that is of the form of a crescent. Another hillock cuts into the crescent like an arrow. In between, the Bhūtanātha water reservoir is found. The township of Badāmī is noted for its notorious filth but the huge water tank, surrounded by soaring hills on the peaks upon which the cave and structural temples appear, generates the rhythm of tranquility as one stands on the fringes of the lake. The architectural and sculptural work in Badāmī is wrought in a new medium of rock, the red sandstone. The quality of the rock itself tells the story of its divine manifestations in the form of iconographical wonders, studded on walls of the caves. As one moves into the city from the Badāmī Railway station, travelling in a *ṭoṅka*, he feels the presence of the hills and finds himself within the *guha* 'cave'. There are three Hindu caves at Badāmī and a number of structural temples. From Badāmī and Aihole (a cave and a cluster of structural temples), the Cāḷukyan activity, extends into Paṭṭadakkal and Mahākūṭa. There are a number of caves in the Kṛṣṇā and Peṉṉār basins, including the structural temples at Alampūr. All these come under Lower Deccan.

Manifestations of Śiva appearing in the Lower Deccan are Trimūrti, *Sthānaka* Śiva, Yogīśvara, Umāsahitamūrti, Ṛṣabhavāhanamūrti, Ardhanārīśvara, Kalyāṇasundaramūrti, Caṇḍikeśvara, Naṭarāja, Gaṅgādharamūrti, Liṅgodbhavamūrti, Kirāta, Bhikṣāṭana, Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti, Gajasaṁhāramūrti, Andhakārī, Tripurāntaka, Vīrabhadra, Kāla, Bhairava and so on. Totally 186 specimens are counted, which manifest themselves in 21 iconographical variables of which only one (Trimūrti) appears in the *garbhagṛha*. The galaxy of Vaiṣṇava imagery includes Viṣṇu in *sthānaka, sayana* and *āsana* forms, Garuḍa-Nārāyaṇa, Bhūvarāhamūrti, Nṛsiṁha-Hiraṇya *yuddhaṁ*, Hiraṇya *vadham*, Kevala-Nṛsiṁha, Vāmana-Trivikrama, Kāliyamardana, Keśi-*vadham*, Govardhanadhāri, *Rāmāyaṇa* events, Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa, *Daśāvatara* panels, Ādiśeṣa, Garuḍa and so on. Totally there are 63 Vaiṣṇava images that cover 21 iconographical variables. Among them two (Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa and Śeṣaśāyī) are housed in *garbhagṛhas*. The two Vaiṣṇava caves of Badāmī are likely to have enshrined seated and standing Viṣṇu in their cellae but both are devoid of any cult image at present. Imagery of Śakti in the Lower Deccan includes Mahiṣāsuramardinī, Sapta Mātṛkas, Sarasvatī, Kālī, Yoninilayā (Padmavaktrakā), seated Devī, Cāmuṇḍā, Naṭeśvarī, Yogīśvarī, Kumārasaṁbhava-Devī and so on. Totally 60 specimens and 12 iconographical variables are present. Among them one (Mahiṣāsuramardinī) is housed in the *garbhagṛha*. Gaṇapati, Skanda and Brahmā are present profusely. They are mostly seated while Gaṇapati appears in *sthānaka* and *nṛtta* aspects. None of them is housed in *garbhagṛhas*. The Lower Śivālaya in Badāmī is supposed to be originally dedicated to Gaṇapati. Besides, two other *sthānaka* images of Gaṇapati from coastal Karnāṭaka (Gokarṇa and Iḍaguñji) are considered to be installed in cellae.

Moving from Bhairavakoṇḍa in the Peṉṉār basin, one reaches the principal field of Pallava activity in the Pālār basin. Kāñcīpuram and Māmallapuram are the twin sites which radiate their influence into a number of other micro centres. Maṇṭakappaṭṭu, supposed to be earliest Pallava cave, is at about 100 kms from Kāñci to the south. The Pallava sphere extends upto the Kāviri basin. Their contribution includes both cave and structural temples, the latter mostly concentrated in and around Kāñci. South of Kāviri is the zone of Pāṇḍyan art whose contribution is mostly caves, which are nearly fifty in number. They are concentrated in Putukkōṭṭai, Maturai and Tirunelvēli districts.

Iconographical variables on the Śaiva theme found in the Far South are *Sthānaka*-Śiva, Somāskanda, Ekapādamūrti, Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Viṇādharamūrti, Yogīśvara, Sukhāsanamūrti, Kalyāṇasundaramūrti, Caṇḍikeśvara, Caṇḍeśānugrahamūrti, Pāśupatāstramūrti, Bhikṣāṭana, Kaṅkāḷamūrti, Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti, Aghoramūrti, Gajasaṁhāramūrti, Andhakāri, Tripurāntaka, Kālasaṁhāramūrti, Vīrabhadra, Brahmaśirascchedakamūrti, Ekādaśa Rudras and Viṣāpaharaṇamūrti. Totally 230 specimens are available of which six are housed in *garbhagṛhas*. It is a unique tradition recorded in the Far South. Images housed in *garbhagṛhas* are Somāskandamūrti (Kāñci, Māmallapuram and Tiruparaṅkuṉṟam), Ṛṣabhavāhanamūrti (Māmallapuram), *Sthānaka* Śiva (Māmallapuram), Umāsahitamūrti (Pirāṉmalai and Tirumalai), Ardhanārīśvara (Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam-south) and Dakṣiṇāmūrti (Irunilamkōḍu). Among the Vaiṣṇava forms found in the Far South are Viṣṇu in *sthānaka*, *āsana* and *sayana* forms, Garuḍa-Nārāyaṇa, Bhūvarāhamūrti, Nṛsiṁha-Hiraṇya *yuddhaṁ*, Hiraṇya *vadham*, Kevala Nṛsiṁha, Yoga-Nṛsiṁha, Trivikrama, Kāliyamaradana, Keśi-*vadham*, Govardhanadhāri, Balarāma, Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa, Amṛtamanthana, Mohinī, Kalki, Dvādaśamūrtis, Yoga-Viṣṇu and so on. The total number of specimens are 85 and the iconographical variables 22. Five among them are housed in *garbhagṛhas*. They are *sthānaka*-Viṣṇu (Māmallapuram, Kīḻmāvilaṅkai and Tirucci lower), *Āsana*-Viṣṇu (Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam-north), Śeṣaśāyī (Māmallapuram, Ciṅkāvaram, Nāmakkal, Malaiyaṭippaṭṭi, Tirumeyyam and Tiruttaṇkāl), Varāhamūrti (Māmallapuram) and Yoga-Nṛsiṁha (Ciṅgaperumāḷkōyil, Nāmakkal and Āṇaimalai). Forms of Devī present in the Far South are Mahiṣāsuramardinī, Siṁhavāhinī, Durgā, Sapta Mātṛkas, Gajalakṣmī, Jyeṣṭhādevī, Sarasvatī, Yogīśvarī, seated Devī, Vaiṣṇavī, Bhuvaneśvarī and so on. Totally 51 specimens and 11 iconographical variables are present. Among them five are housed in *garbhagṛhas*. They are Durgā (Māmallapuram), Mahiṣāsuramardinī (Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam-north), Bhuvaneśvarī (Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam-north), Gajalakṣmī (Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam-north) and Jyeṣṭhādevī (Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam-north). Gaṇapati and Skanda are mostly seated and standing. There is a rare exception of Nṛtta-Gaṇapati in the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam north group. Brahmā is mostly standing and appears in the cella in his Brahmāsasta aspect. It is the only evidence of Brahmā appearing in cella in early medieval art. Gaṇapati seems to have commanded a *garbhagṛha* status at Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi and Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam-north but in these cases the traditions are later and the original installation of the images were not like that. In this respect, Skanda is better as he is found housed in the cellae of the Āṉaimalai, Tirumalai and Tiruccentūr caves. In all these instances the Lord is seated.

The total number of iconographical specimens is around 1,100 and the variables around 80 (see table V). Nearly 20 types are housed in *garbhagṛhas*. It is interesting to find most of the specimens, iconographical variables and those housed in *garbhagṛhas* appear in huge numbers in the Far South. Not only Śiva, Viṣṇu and Devī but also Brahmā and Skanda present a uniform trend in this respect. It is to generalize that the *bhakti* cult, adumbrated by the Āḻvār and Nāyaṉmār, should have been the motivating factor behind the developments. Even though the picture presented by quantitative analysis adds an importance to the quota of contribution made by the Far South, each and every region is unique in its own sphere.

In the Upper Deccan, the dimensions of the cave and sculptural frame are simply marvelous. Excepting perhaps the Varāhamūrti and Śeṣaśāyī of Udayagiri (M.P.) and the open air *bas relief*, illustrating the Great Penance in Māmallapuram, the sculptural magnitude in the Ellora, Elephanta and Jogeśvarī caves is unrivalled. Many such masterpieces in the Jogeśvarī cave are dilapidated but the surviving artefacts bear witness to their erstwhile grandiloquence.

Śiva playing 'Dice Game' with Devī is one of the unique illustrations that we come across in the Upper Deccan. Noted among them are found in Elephanta, Ellora (Caves XIV, XVI, XXI & XXIX) and Jogeśvarī. Surrounded by a host of his *gaṇas* and *nandi*, present at the lower half of the panel, Śiva is engaged in a sport with his consort. It fails to appear even in the core zone of Cāḷukyan art in and around Badāmī. In Tamil Nadu we find its nearest equal in the Pirāṉmalai (cf. Tirumalai) cave but these do not illustrate Dice Game. Another important form, akin to 'Dice Game', is Kailāsanātha, otherwise called Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti, the finest samples of which are found in Elephanta and Ellora (Cave XIV, XVI, XXI & XXIX).

Tāṇḍavamurti is a pan-Indian theme that we find from Elephanta in the west to Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam in the south. The Lord enacts several modes of which *caturam* is the most popular. Others are *ūrdhavajānu*, *lalāṭatilakam*, *kuñcitam*, *vṛścikam* and *ānandatāṇḍavam*. Among these forms *lalāṭatilakam*, *vṛścikam* and *ānandatāṇḍavam* are typical of the Far South. A rare specimen of *lalāṭatilakam* appears at the *façade* section in the Kailāsa of Ellora and *vṛścikam* in the Virūpākṣa temple at Paṭṭadakkal, thus pointing out channels of interaction from the core zone of Pallava art to the Cāḷukyan and Rāṣṭrakūṭa centres. *Ūrdhvajānu* (XVI of Ellora and Virūpākṣa temple at Paṭṭadakkal) finds its classical expression in the Deccan while *vṛścikam* and *lalāṭatilakam* are at their best in Māmallapuram and Kāñcīpuram. These fail to appear nearer in the Pāṇḍyan area.

Another marvel of the Upper Deccan is Gajasaṁhāramūrti, which also includes the idiom pertaining to Andhakāri. The masterpieces are from Elephanta and Ellora (Caves XIV, XV, XVI & XXIX). The Lord is attended by Kālī in Ellora (XV) who holds a cup in the hand, which means the demon held by the Lord in his *triśūla* is Raktabīja. It is the only one of its type within the range of the study. In the plinth section of the Nandi-*maṇḍapa* (XVI of Ellora) the Lord is attended by the Mātṛkas, which is another novelty. By and large the present theme finds its meaningful representations in Elephanta and Ellora. There are imitations in the structural temples of Kāñci but they are dull and do not compare with the Upper Deccan.

Nṛsiṁha engaged in a duel with Hiraṇya is one of the outstanding works on the Vaiṣṇava subject that we find in Caves XV and XVI of Ellora. These are considered to be greatest among the world's best few in plastic arts. The *Rāmāyaṇa* panels of the Kailāsa in Ellora, including Sītāpaharaṇa and Vāli-Sugrīva *yuddhaṁ*, are noted for their individuality within the field. Among the images of Śeṣaśāyī are those in the Bhokardān cave and few in Ellora (Caves XV, XVI and XXVII). But the classical impressions are found occupying the cellae of Uṇḍavalli, Ciṅkāvaram, Malaiyaṭippaṭṭi, Tirumeyyam and Nāmakkal. All are gargantuan productions, challenging comparison with the Elephanta imagery.

Mahiṣāsuramardinī, engaged in slaughtering the zoomorphic *mahiṣa* is typical of the Deccan of which the most striking piece is from Cave I Badāmī. Devī engaged in a combat with the theriomorphic demon is present in the Kailāsa, attended by a cavalcade of demigods, including the *dikpālakas*. The subject has its roots in the Mahiṣāsuramardinī-*maṇḍapa* at Māmallapuram in addition to a miniature at Paṭṭadakkal. In the Far South the most familiar way of representing Devī in her aspect as Mahiṣāmardinī is to make her stand on the decapitated head of *mahiṣa*. The iconograph is present in several of the cave temples from Māmallapuram in the north to Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam in the south. It became the ritual image, fit for worship, being installed in the *garbhagṛha* as the *mūlabera* as is evidenced by the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam cave. The iconographic programme in Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam reaches such a high level of perfection that we find not less than four among the aspects of Devī occupying the cellae, which is simply marvellous within the period under study. It is likely to have happended by about the time of Varaguṇa Pāṇḍya in the later half of the 8th century A.D.

Another important perspective of Devī is Yoninilayā who has a lotus in place of the head and is laid up in *pretāsana* posture with the legs contracted upwards and exposing the genital organ. Several images are found in Badāmī, Mahākuṭa, Aihole and Alampūr. The Nandi-*maṇḍapa* of Rāmeśvara (Cave XXI, Ellora) and the Ucchimalli-*guḍi* at Aihole house two remarkable specimen in which Devī has the human head instead of the lotus. All these point out the worship of *yoni* to which a devotee is supposed to offer *bindu* in propitiation. The image fails to appear in the Tamil country but we find a later temple at Tārācuram, near Kuṁbhakōṇam. In Ellora the earliest cave temple is found wherein the image is housed in the *garbhagṛha*. It is just above the Gaṇeśa-*leṇa* group, called Jogeśvarī-*mātā mandir*.

As a galaxy of the sculptural art several of the cave temples in the Upper Deccan occupy a unique place. In Ellora itself we find Caves XIV, XV, XVI, XXI, XXVII and XXIX. Among these *Ḍumārleṇa* like the Elephanta cave is full of the presence of Śiva. Cave XXVII is noted for its orientation towards Vaiṣṇavism. Others are an admixture of the various deities but project the personality of Śiva and to a limited extent. Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Gaṇapati and Skanda are present sporadically. Brahmā receives an important place within the organisation of Caves XV, XVI, XVII and XXV in Ellora. Gaṇapati and Skanda receive an important treatment in caves XV and XXII. It is supposed that Cave XIV in Ellora was dedicated to Devī. Several of her manifestations appear in Ellora; noted among them being the Mātṛkas in XIV, Gajalakṣmī in XVI, Sarasvatī and Lakṣmī in XV and XXII and so on. Among the other important centres, noted for their sculptural profusion are Bhokardān, Takli Ḍhokeśvara, Jogeśvarī and Maṇḍapeśvara.

It is quite interesting to find that not even a single temple (excepting perhaps Cave XXVII) of Ellora is present in the Upper Deccan, dedicated in its totality either to Viṣṇu or Devī. In this respect the Lower Deccan and the Far South are better. Caves II and III in Badāmī and the Vaikuṇṭha Perumāḷ temple at Kāñci are dedicated to Viṣṇu and the Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam cave as reorganised in the middle of the 8th century A.D. declared for Devī even though the original dedication was in favour of Śiva and Viṣṇu. Numerically speaking, the dedication of temples, total number of iconographical specimens (541), iconographical variables (more than 40) and forms housed in the *sanctum* (totally 7) stand to the credit of Śiva which means Śaivism was the most popular religion. Then come Vaiṣṇavism and Śāktam.

The cave temples in the Lower Deccan are numerically lesser but very important from the iconographical point of view. Cave III in Badāmī is a veritable museum of Vaiṣṇava forms, comparable to the Śaiva counterparts in Elephanta and Ellora. It is the only cave in the region, including the Far South, designed on a macro scale. It measures 57 x 58 x 10 feet by length, breadth and height. There are six iconographical representations of largescale dimension. Among them Trivikrama, Kevala Nṛsiṁha and Ādimūrti seated on Śeṣa, are incomparably superior creations. They have no equals within the bounds of Indian art through the ages. Kevala Nṛsiṁha appears in the same *sthānaka* aspect in the Durgā temple at Aihole and the Vaikuṇṭha Perumāḷ temple at Kāñci. The Lord appears in seated aspect in the Veṭṭuvāṉkōyil at Kaḷukumalai and the Raṅganātha cave at Malaiyaṭippaṭṭi. Among these specimens, the Badāmī piece is the most significant because of the rare elements that it includes, for example the *padma* placed on the Lord's head and the enigmatic facial expression that antipates Mona Lisa.

The Lower Deccan is famous for its structural temples wherein the *rekha-nāgara* and *drāviḍa vimānas* appear. Paṭṭadakkal, Aihole, Mahākūṭa and Alampūr are other centres where the temples are studded with a rich variety of iconographical masterpieces. The treasures of early medieval art are enshrined in these abodes of iconography; noted among them being Harihara (Malagiṭṭi Śivālaya, Badāmī), Lakulīśa (Mahākūṭa), a miniature of Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti (Mahākūṭa), Sūrya (Virūpākṣa temple, Paṭṭadakkal), Brahmā (Hucchapayya and Kont-*guḍi*, Aihole), Śeṣaśāyī (Kont-*guḍi*, Aihole), Garuḍa-Viṣṇu (Durgā temple, Aihole), Bhikṣāṭana and Naṭarāja (Svarga-Brahmā temple, Alampūr), *Dikpālakas* (Bāla-Brahmā temple, Alampūr) *Kṣetrapālakas* (Svarga-Brahmā temple, Alampūr) and so on.

The rocky medium in the Far South is of the hardest sediments and so the caves are of smaller dimension. The smallest of the cave temples are to be found here, examples being the Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa* at Māmallapuram, Kīḻmāvilaṅkai and several others in the Pāṇḍya country (e.g. Pirāṉmalai, Tiruttaṅkal and so on). The Maṇṭakapaṭṭu cave, supposed to be the earliest, is a pretty largescale work which measures 37 x 26 x 7 feet by length, breadth and height. All the caves in Tamil Nadu and Kerala are of the hard granite. K.R. Srinivasan ascribes the smaller magnitude of the caves to the type of rock available in the region.

Māmallapuram is the only place in Tamil Nadu comparable to the array of cave temples in the Upper Deccan. Māmaṇṭur and Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam are the other two places wherein a network of caves are to be found. Tamil Nadu again is the home of monolithic temples of which there are eight in Māmallapuram and one at Kaḻukumalai. Though of a smaller dimension, structurally and stylistically the models here are of a unique category. The Veṭṭuvāṉkōyil, Dharmarāja-*ratha*, Arjuna-*ratha* and the three *rathas* in Valayaṉkuṭṭai group are in the *drāviḍa-vimāna* type. The Bhima-*ratha* and Gaṇeśa-*ratha* are of the *kūṭaśāla* type. Most striking among them are the Nakula-Sahadeva-*ratha* and Draupadī-*ratha*, the former in *gajapṛṣṭa* form and the latter hut-shaped.

Kāñcīpuram is the only centre in Tamil Nadu, comparable to Paṭṭadakkal and Aihole wherein a cluster of structural temples are found. The Vaikuṇṭha Perumāḷ temple and the Uttiramērūr temple are in a novel form, called *aṣṭāṅgavimāna*, which provide for three cellae in the vertical order, housing images of Viṣṇu in his triple forms, *āsana*, *sayana* and *sthānaka*. The form of the temple and the type of iconic representation in the cellae are characteristic of Tamil Nadu. The Vaikuṇṭha Perumāḷ temple is the abode of Vaiṣṇava iconographs, which finds no parallel in the entire range of art during the period under study. The same temple also houses a cavalcade of secular motifs, giving a figurative shape to the history of Pallava dynasty, which is another marvel of the age. In the Kailāsa of Kāñci we find eleven of the Pallavā kings, placed on par with the Ekādaśa Rudras, which type of representation is also simply marvellous in the art of South India. The Nārttāmalai cave houses the images of twelve Viṣṇus, called Dvādaśamūrtis, which is another unique representation that one finds in a rock-cut temple. All these point out the fact that though the Tamil patrons and artists were unable to undertake largescale works as at Elephanta and Ellora, they set the norms in other respects, which have stood the test of time, unsurpassed and unrivalled.

The tradition of working out *bas reliefs* got popularised by the Pallava artists. The Great Penance in Māmallapuram, occupying an area of nearly 200 square feet, is a challenging undertaking. It speaks to the heart of the masterskill of Tamil artists from generation to generation simply because of the fact that neither the Western Chāḷukyas nor the Rāṣṭrakūṭas in spite of the vast resources at disposal could streamline an ambitious undertaking like this. The Kailāsa of Ellora is gigantic but the intricacy and delicacy of the Great Penance are found in none of its sculptural work.

The Govardhanadhāri of Māmallapuram is an open air *bas relief*, superimposed with a *maṇḍapa* of the Vijayanagara time. Among the Vaiṣṇava carvings it comes next only to the Śeṣaśāyī and Varāhamūrti of Udayagiri in its conceptual framework, the volume and depth of work put in.

The Pallavas and Pāṇḍyas have contributed nearly 100 cave temples and a number of structural temples. Each and every piece of work is unique in its own way and possesses some new traits viewed against the total perspective of rock-cut art in India. They are microcosmically designed but from the iconographical point of view possess indelible imprints of master-craftsmanship. The Dharmarāja-*ratha* of Māmallapuram, the Veṭṭuvāṉkōyil of Kaḻukumalai and the cave temples at Vallam, Tirukkaḻukkuṉṟam, Ciṅkaperumāḷkōyil, Ciṅkāvaram, Kīḻmāvilaṅkai, Nāmakkal, Tirucciráppaḷḷi, Malaiyaṭippaṭṭi, Tirumeyyam, Nārttāmalai, Kuṉṉakkuṭi, Makipālaṉpaṭṭi, Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi, Tirumalai, Pirāṉmalai, Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, Āṉaimalai and Viḻiñam are the resorts of wonders in rock-cut art.

In addition to the structural temples in Māmallapuram (Shore, Mukunda Nāyaṉār and Olakkneśvara) and Kāñcīpuram (Kailāsa, Airavateśvara, Vaikuṇṭha Perumāḷ, Mukteśvara, Iṟavātaneśvara, Piṟavātaneśvara and Mātaṅgeśvara), there are a host of other temples at Takkōlam (Jalāndīśvara), Tiruttaṇi (Vīraṭṭaneśvara), Kūram (Ādikeśva Perumāḷ), Tiruppattūr (Kailāsanātha), Kalampākkam (Tirunāgeśvara), Paṉamalai (Talagirīśvara) and so on. With its cluster of temples, Kāñcīpuram was a temple city as portrayed in the *Mattavilāsaprahasana*. An important point to be noted in respect of the Tamil temples is that not even a single specimen of the *nāgara* type is to be found here though in Alampūr, Paṭṭadakkal, Badāmī and Aihole there are examples of the *drāviḍa* type. The Virūpākṣa of Paṭṭadakkal and the Kailāsa of Ellora are monumental evidences to prove the historical process of give and take, which was the spirit of the time. Somāskandamūrti, Naṭarāja-*lalāṭatilakam* and *vṛścikam*, Māmallapuram type of Mahiṣāsuramardinī, Bhūvarāhamūrti resting his leg on the head of Ādiśeṣa and Somāskanda are few of the typical Tamil idioms that one comes across in Paṭṭadakkal, Ellora and Mahākūṭa. Caṇḍikeśvara by way of Bhairavakoṇḍa and Alampūr found his way up to Ellora.

Gaṇapati came to Piḷḷaiyārpaṭṭi from Udayagiri via Jogeśvarī and the literary concepts relating to the birth of Skanda had a tremendous impact over the Tamil writers of the 4th century A.D. Similarly concepts of Devī as told in the *Devīmahātṁyam* found their uninterrupted way into the Tamil country so that the geocentric goddess, Korravi, finds union with Mahiṣāsuramardinī. Iḷankōvaṭikaḷ, author of *Cilappatikāram*, has ideas in tune with the maxim, "Let noble thoughts come to us from every side". The idea is very well demonstrated by the two Vedic gods, Indra and Varuṇa, who not only got a hold over the Tamil society but also became the principal deities of two among the five *tiṇais*. Festivals were undertaken in honour of Indra that is so well acclaimed by the Tamil twin epics, *Cilappatikāram* and *Maṇimēkalai*. All these show that racial disharmony, linguistic fanaticism and religious bigotism were never encouraged to raise their ugly heads. The Āryan and Drāviḍian, Sanskrit and Tamil, North and South, caste and creed, and colour and faith were all the two polarities of the order of nature but both were wedded to each other in the medieval Indian tradition in such a way that they remained the warp and woof of a finely knit cloth. There was unity in diversity, and the "emotional integration" advocated by ardent patriots of the country like Panditji was not a nightmare through the ages in Bharatavarṣa.

From a study of early medieval literature and survey of the arts of the period,it is clear that several streams of ideological inflow have gone into the making of a pluralistic religious culture and multifaceted art. The following are few of the elements that we may count:

1. Prehistoric legacy: Liṅga, Skanda's emblem *śakti* (T. *vēl* 'spear');
2. Indus contribution: Yogīśvara, Paśupati, Mother Goddess;
3. Vedic: Indra, Varuṇa, the *dikpālakas* and minor deities;
4. Buddhist-Jain: Yogic forms, nudity, *sayana* aspect (Viṣṇu) etc.;
5. Aboriginal traits: for example *vāhanas* of the gods;
6. Regional quota: Tamil concepts for example, Murukan, Korravai, Civan, Tirumāl and so on.

Therefore, the *bhakti* cult of the Āḻvārs and Nāyanmār is the resultant product of ages of thoughts on religious dialogue that gushed forth like the lava of a volcanic eruption and crystallised by about the 7th-8th century A.D.

The present study is a dip in visualiging the sublime spirit and lofty ideologies of early medieval religious tradition and iconography. We cannot hope to have delved deep into the realms of either Śiva, Viṣṇu, Śakti, Gaṇapati, Skanda, Brahmā or the Minor deities because Śiva is a *mahāyogi* and his character in art is *yoga*; Viṣṇu is a *māyāvi* and his personality in art is *māyā*, and Devī is both *mahāmāyā* and *mahāyoginī*. The field work undertaken and the few hundreds of pages written are not suffifient enough to guage the depth of the problem. For the writing process, sources from Sanskrit and Tamil have been taken into account and there must be other regional material. Much remains yet to be done and the field has to be visited again and again. We have contributed a number of articles (see attachment which follows this section) and there is scope for further investigation on the guidelines already formulated. I hope to do more work in the long run and I hope that the future generation will take up the job left unfinished. Research never stops with an individual or an institution but runs through the ages. Men may come, men may go but an increasing purpose goes on for ever.

TABLE V
CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT OF TABLES I - IV

Sl. no. Theme		*Upper Deccan*	*Lower Deccan*	*Far South*	*Total*
1. Viṣṇu	I	16	21	22	
	II	61	63	85	209
	III	-	2	5	
2. Śiva	I	24	21	33	
	II	125	186	230	541
	III	1	1	6	
3. Devī	I	15	12	11	
	II	57	60	51	168
	III	2	1	5	
4. Gaṇapati	II	18	30	26	74*
	III	1	?	?	
5. Skanda	II	6	7	7	20*
	III	-	-	1	
6. Brahmā	II	9	18	17	44*
	III	-	-	1	
Total					1056

I Iconographical variables
II Total number of specimens surveyed
III Variables housed in *garbhagṛhas*

* Independent images alone are counted.

Glossary*

abhiṣeka	ablution, bathing the image with holy water
agni	'fire'
agnicārya	ritual of fire, offering to fire during wedding rituals
āgyapātra	vessel of clarified butter
aja	immortal, birthless
akṣamālā	garland of holy beads, rosary
aṇaṅku (T)	a divine spirit, often a malivolous deity
añjali	worship, reverence
antarāla	the narrow space which links the holy of the holies with the hall for devotees
ardha	'half'
aṣṭa	'eight'
asura	'demon'
avatāra	an incarnation of god, especially of Viṣṇu
bāna	'arrow'
bhakti	'devotion', contextually the devotional cult
bhaṅga	flexion in images
bhiṭṭi	pāda section of the Hindu temple, i.e., the wall of holy of the holies
cāmara	a busy tail of *cāmara* (*bas grunniens*), used as flywhisk or fan, insignia of royalty
candra	'moon'
cannavīra	a warrior's emblem, a cross belt, attributed to belligerent deities
catur	'four'
caturmukha	'four faced'
cin mudrā	a hand posture in which the thumb and index finger are joined in a circle with the other fingers extended, a symbol of teaching

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* T. Tamil, H. Hindi, Te. Telugu, K. Kannada all other Sanskrit

daṇḍa	'staff'
darpaṇa	'mirror'
daśa	'ten'
deva	'god'
dhanus	'bow'
dvaja	'flag'
dhyāna	'meditation'
dhyāna mudrā	a seated posture, symbolising meditation; seated cross legged with palms of both hands placed on lap one above the other
dik	'direction'
dikpālaka	regent of a direction
dvāra	threshold of a house
gadā	Indian mace
gaja	'elephant'
gaṇa	a dwarf attendant
gandharva	a class of celestial beings
grabhagṛha	holy of the holies
garuḍa	'kite', mount of Viṣṇu and Vaiṣṇavī
ghaṇṭa	'bell'
gopura	'gateway'
gṛha	'house', a residential place
guḍi (Te. & K)	'temple'
haṁsa	'swan' or 'goose'
hasta	'hand', showing a posture of the palm
jaṭā	locks of hair
jaṭāmakuṭa	tiara made out of the locks of hair, usually attributed to Śiva and Brahmā or seers and sages
jvāla	'flame'
jaya	'victory'
kamaṇḍalū	waterpot, used by the anchorite, attributed to Brahmā and Śiva in his yogic forms
kaṅkana	'bracelet' tied to the wrist
kaṭi	'hip'

kaṭibandha	an ornament on the hip
keyūra	a bracelet on upper arm
khaḍga	'sword'
kheṭaka	'shield'
koṣṭha	'niche'
kṛṣṇajīna	a garment made of the skin of antelope
Kūṟṟu (T)	'fate', an epithet of Yama
kusa	reed a variety of grass used in ritual prayers
leṇa (H)	'cave'
mahiṣa	'buffalo'
makara	a species of fish, a mythical creature
makuṭa	crown
mālā	'garland'
malar (T)	'flower'
maṇḍapa	'pavilion', a pillared hall
maṟai (T)	scripture, the *Vedas*
marutam	one of the five-fold divisions of the land, fields and a watery region
meṣa	'ram'
mṛga	'gazelle'
mukha	'face'
mūlabera	principal idol of a temple meant for worship
mūrti	a figurative form of god
nābi	'navel'
nāga	'snake'
nāginī	female of a snake
nandi	'bull', vehicle of Śiva
neytal (T)	littoral region
nirandhara	a temple of temple with no provision for circumambulatory passage around the cella
nilam (T)	'land'
pāda	'leg', wall portion of the temple
padma	'lotus'
padmāsana	(1) a seated posture, legs crossed with the palms above

	(2) a seat, shaped like a lotus
padmapīṭha	a seat, shaped like a lotus
pañca	'five'
pañcabhūta	the five elements of nature: earth, water, wind, ether and fire
pāśa	'noose'
pātra	a vessel or pitcher
poṉ (T)	'gold'
pradakṣiṇa	'circumambulation'
prākāra	circuits of a temple
pū (T)	'flower'
puñjam	a foliated excessive garment on the hip which is part of the loin cloth
puṣtaka	'book'
ratha	'chariot'
ṛṣi	'sage' or 'seer'
śakti	'spear' or 'lance'
saṁbhava	'birth'
sāndhāra	a passage meant for circumambulation
śaṅkha	conch-shell
sarpa	snake
sarvatobhadra	a temple with four entrances on cardinal directions for an entry
śilpa	sculpture
sṛṣṭi	creation
sruk	a spoon used in Vedic rituals
sruva	a spoon used in Vedic rituals
sthānaka	standing posture (of an image)
svayambu	'self-manifest'
tāmarai (T)	'lotus'
teyvam (T)	'god'
ticai (T)	Skt. *dik* 'direction'
tiṇai (T)	a landed division, five fold classification of lands
tri	three
tribhaṅga	an image with three flexions
trikūṭa	a temple with triple cellae in triangular form

trimukha	three faces
triśūla	trident
udara	abdomen
udarabandha	an ornament tied to the abdomen
unti (T)	Skt. *nābi* 'navel'
utkuṭikāsana	a seated posture with knees erect and palms rested on seat
uttarīya	an upper cloth, placed on the shoulder and sent across the body
vāhana	'vehicle'
vajra	'thunderbold', emblem of Indra
vidyādhara	a class of attendant gods
vimāna	a temple or more specifically its superstructure
vṛṣabha	bull
yajñopavīta	sacred thread, put around the shoulder by the *dvija* 'twice born'
yoga	meditation
yogi	sage

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Kulacēkarar: *Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi*
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Toṇṭaratippoṭi: *Tirumālai, Tiruppaḷḷieḻucci*

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Periya: *Tirumoḻi, Tiruppallāṇṭu*

Āṇṭāḷ: *Tiruppāvai, Nācciyār Tirumoḻi*

Tirumaṅkai: *Periya Tirumoḻi, Tirukkuṟuntāṇṭakam, Tiruneṭun-tāṇṭakam, Tiruveḻukūṟṟirukkai, Ciṟiyatirumaṭal* and *Periyatirumatal.*

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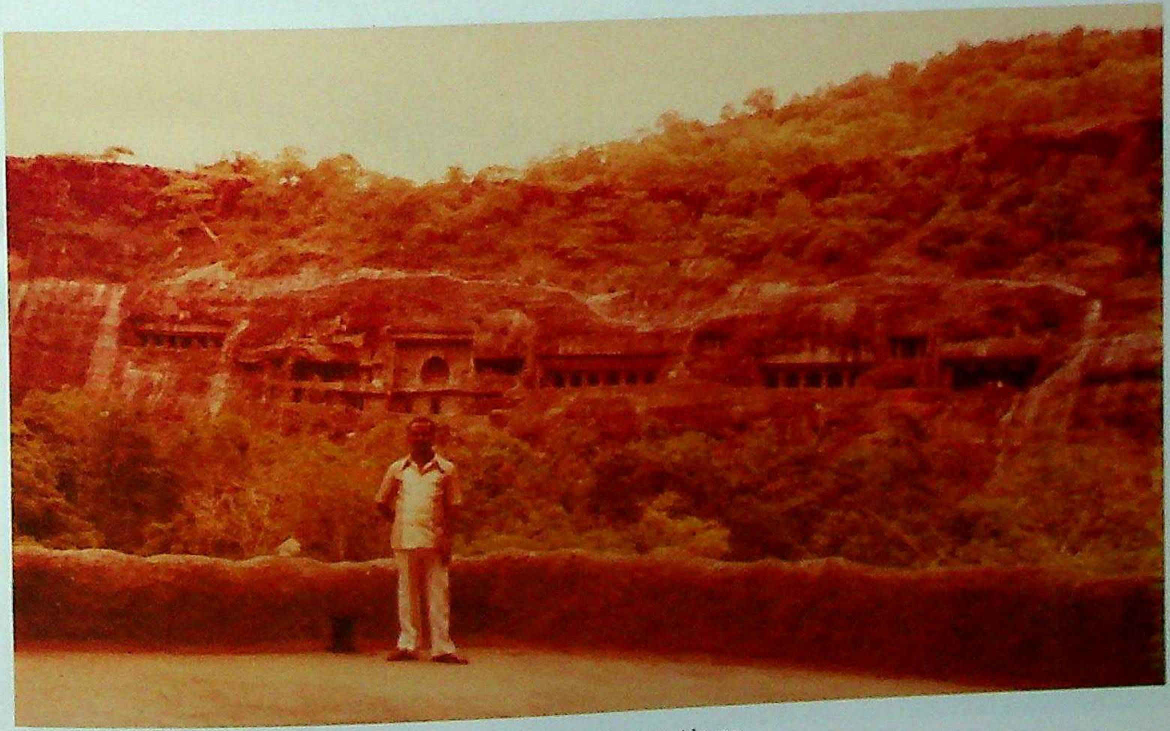
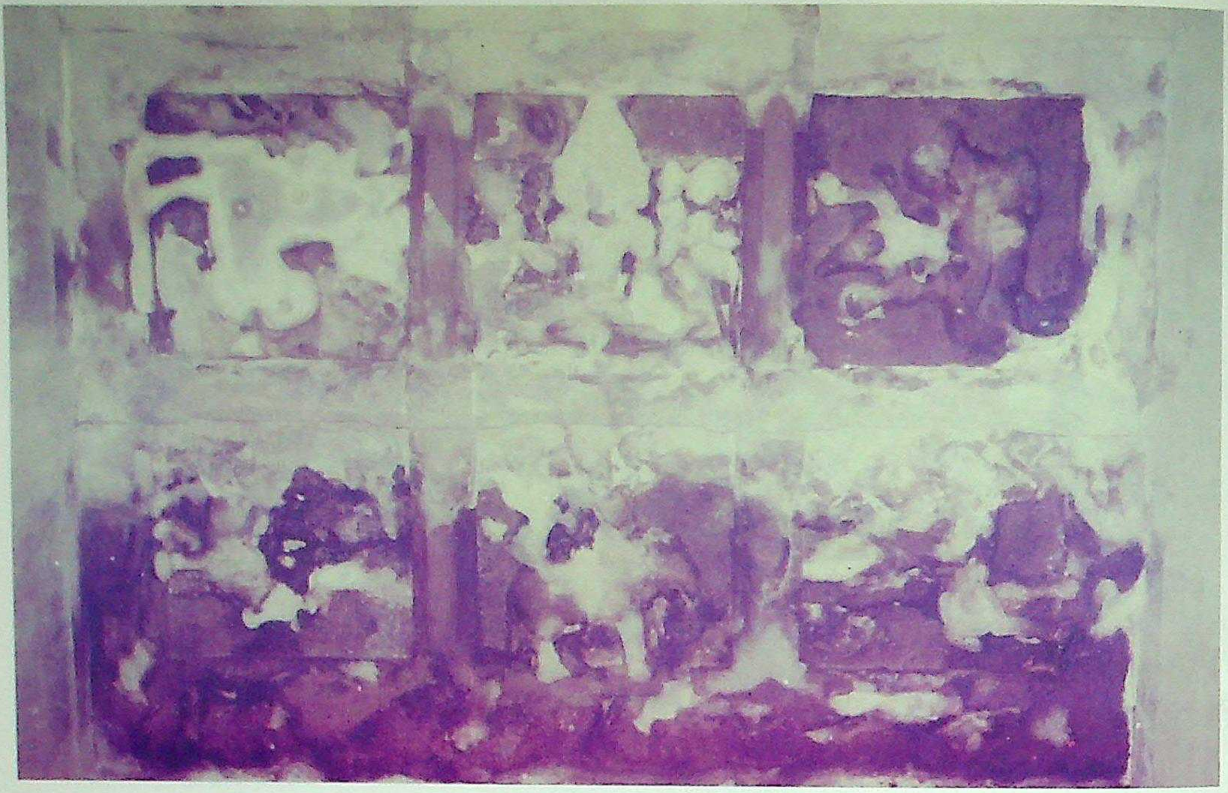
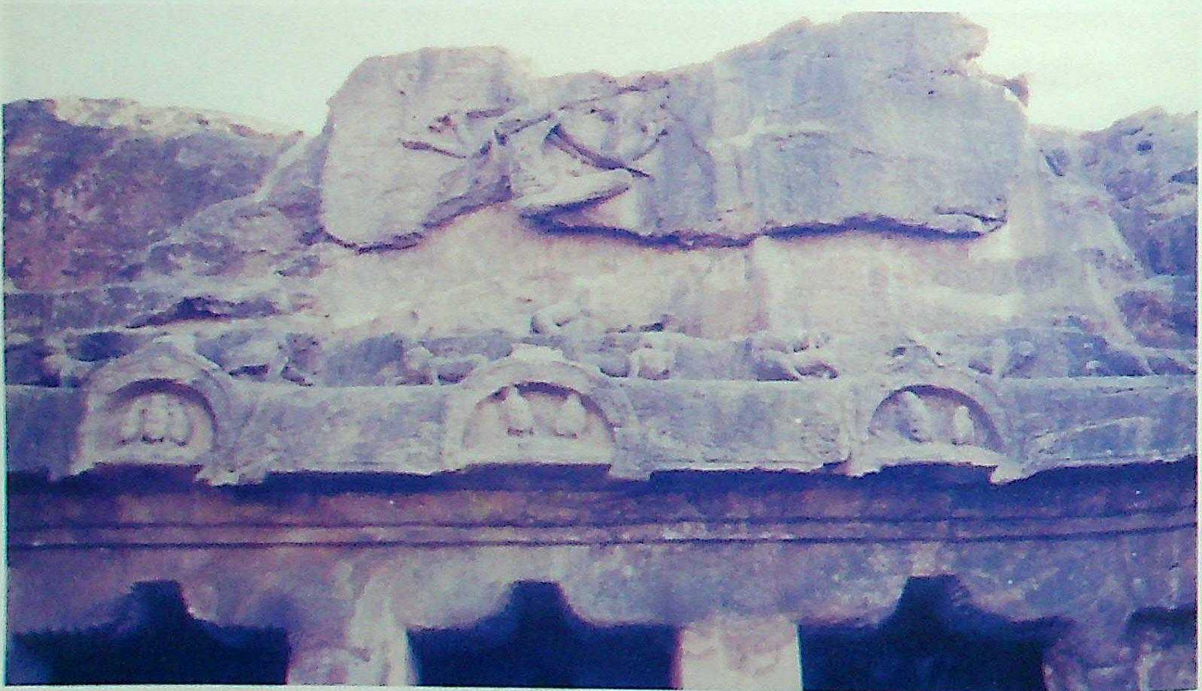
Pl. I.1. The author on the rampart of Tungabhadra, Alampūr.



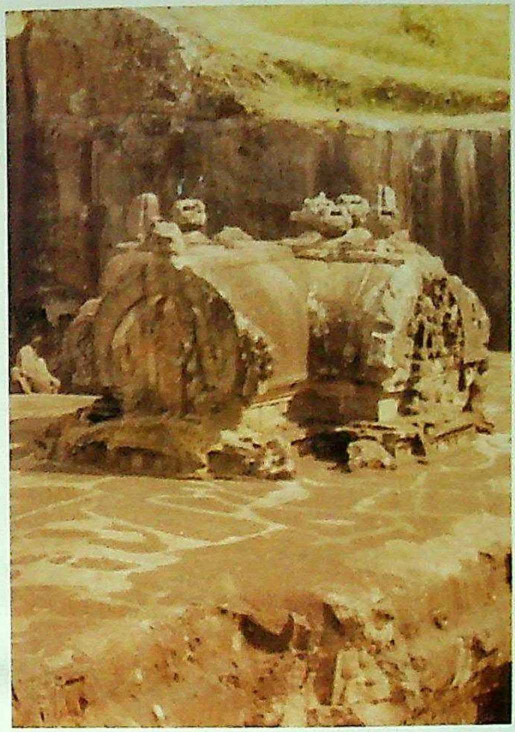
Pl. I.2. The author at Ajaṇṭa.



Pl. II.1. Brahmā and *dikpālakas*, Kont-*guḍi*, Aihole.



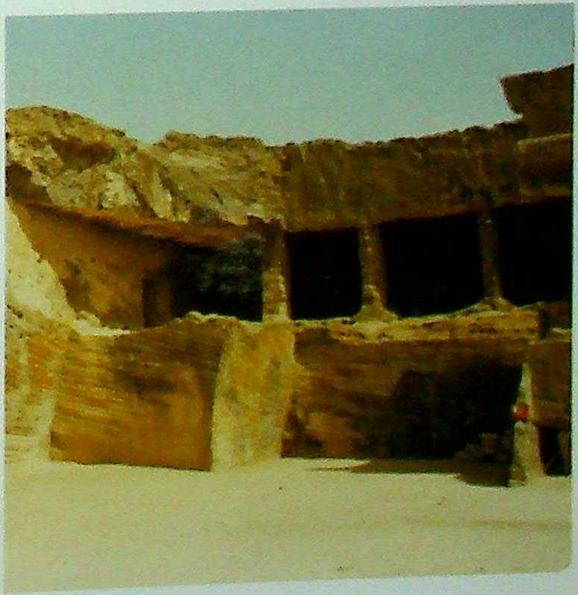
Pl. II.2. Brahmā and others within *kuḍu*, Cave IV, Moghulrājapuram.



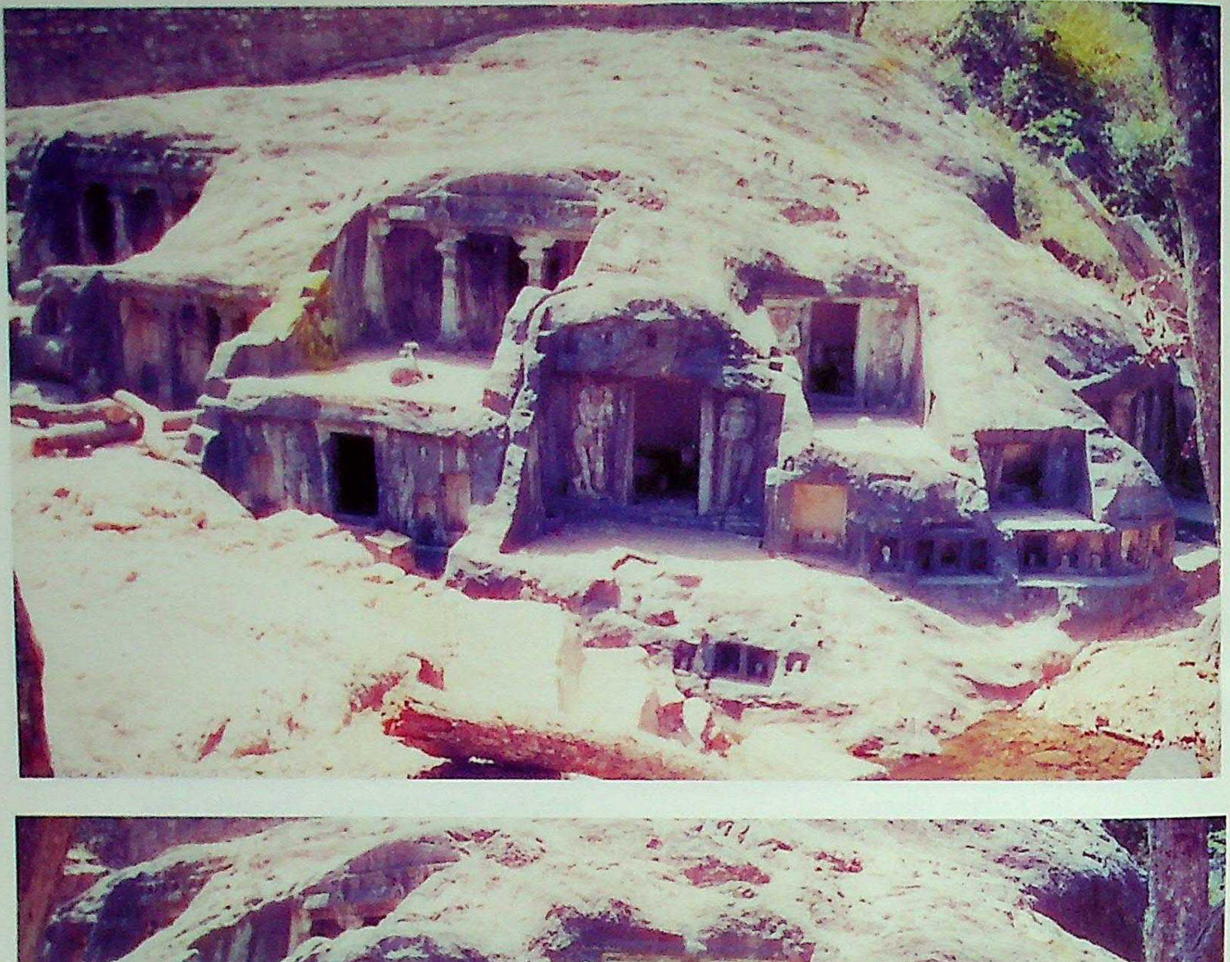
Pl. III.1. *Davārasobha* type of *gopura*, the Kailāsa, Ellora.

Pl. III.2. Author with Vai. Gaṇapati Sthapati, Seminar on Cave Temples, Tamil University, Thanjavur 1990.

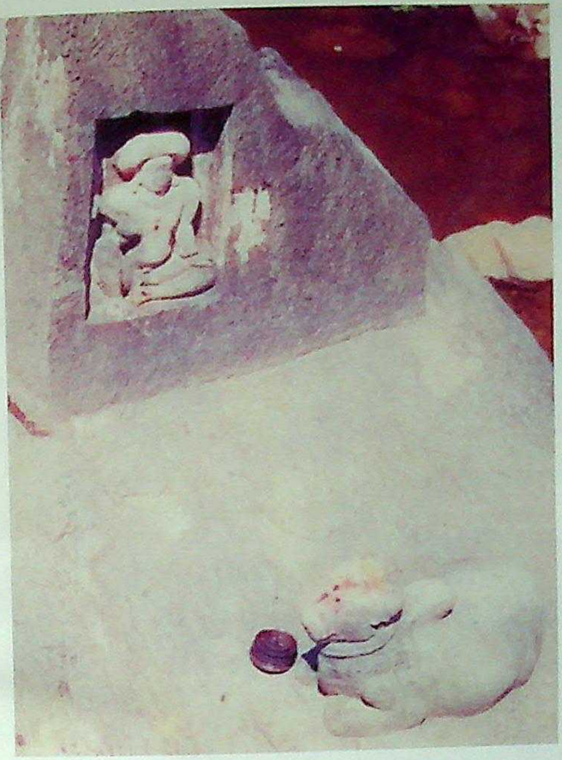
Pl. IV.1. Part of the hill, Bhairavakoṇḍa.



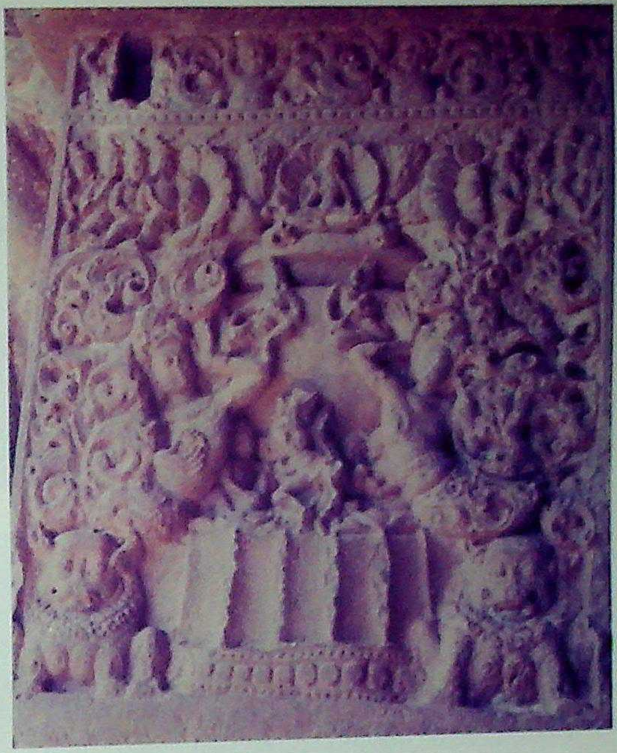
Pl. IV.2. Junāgāḍ caves.



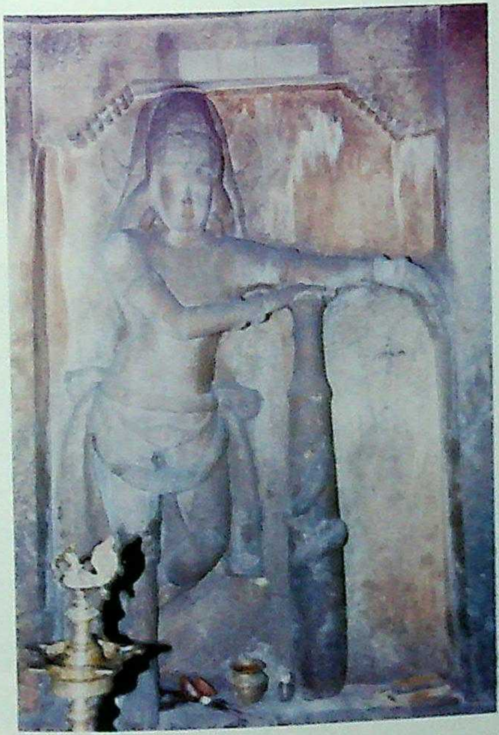
Pl. V.1-2. The Bhairavakoṇḍa cave temples.

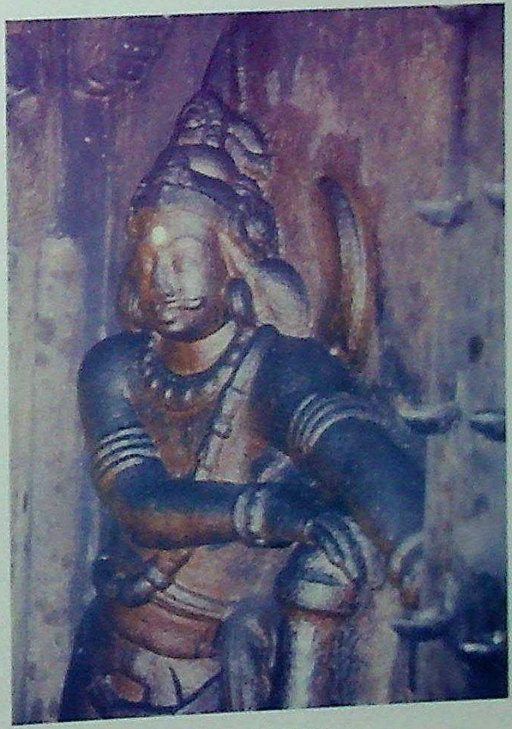


Pl. VI.1. Caṇḍikeśvara and Nandi, Bhairavakoṇḍa.

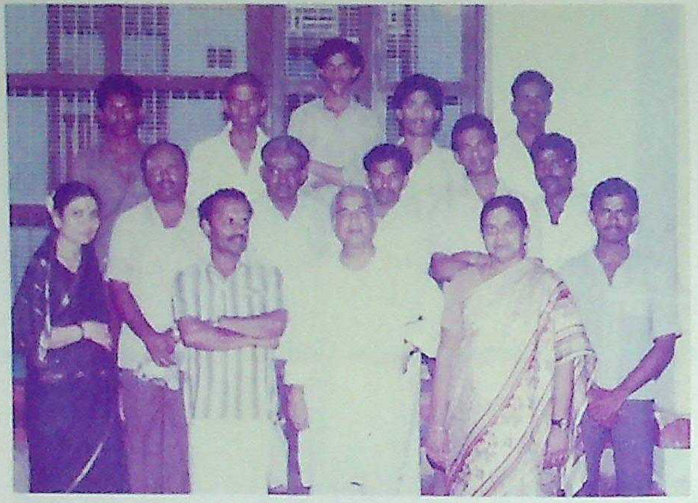


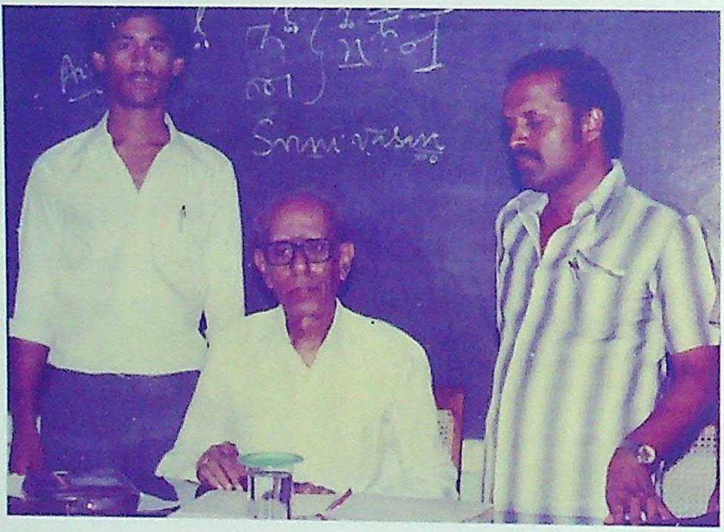
Pl. VI.2. Decorative motifs, Cave XV, Ellora.



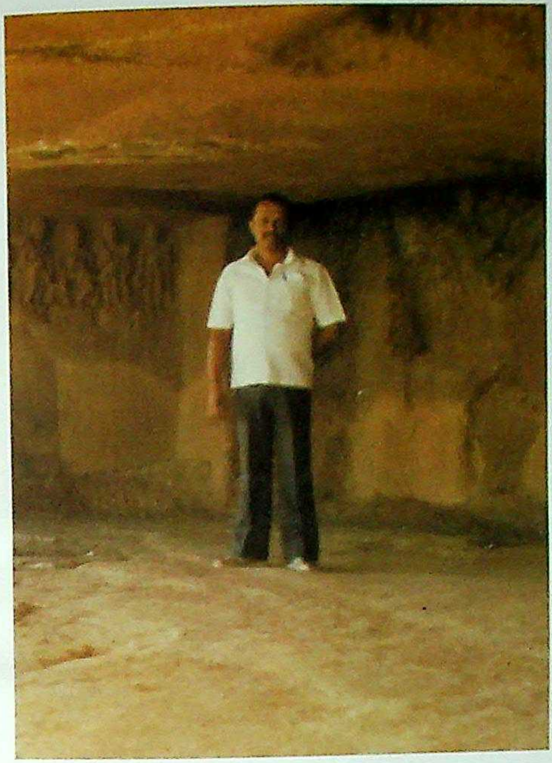


Pl. VII.1-2. *Dvārapālakas*, Cave temples in Putukkōṭṭai region (RKKR).





Pl. VIII. Seminar on "Temple Cities", The Śrīraṅgam Temple (1986): 1. Vasundhara Filliozat, K.V. Soundararajan, R. Champakalakshmi, the author and his old students; 2. K.R. Srinivasan seated, the author and a student; 3. The author speaking, K.R. Srinivasan musing and Prof. Alalasundaram watching (all photos in the Tamil University old campus at the Palace).



Pl. IX. 1. The author in Kanheri caves.

Pl. IX. 2. The author at the top of the Jain carvings in Nākamalai Putukkōṭṭai.

Pl. X.1. National Seminar at Khajurāho on Khajurāho, at the steps of the Kāṇḍariya Mahādeva Temple (1987).

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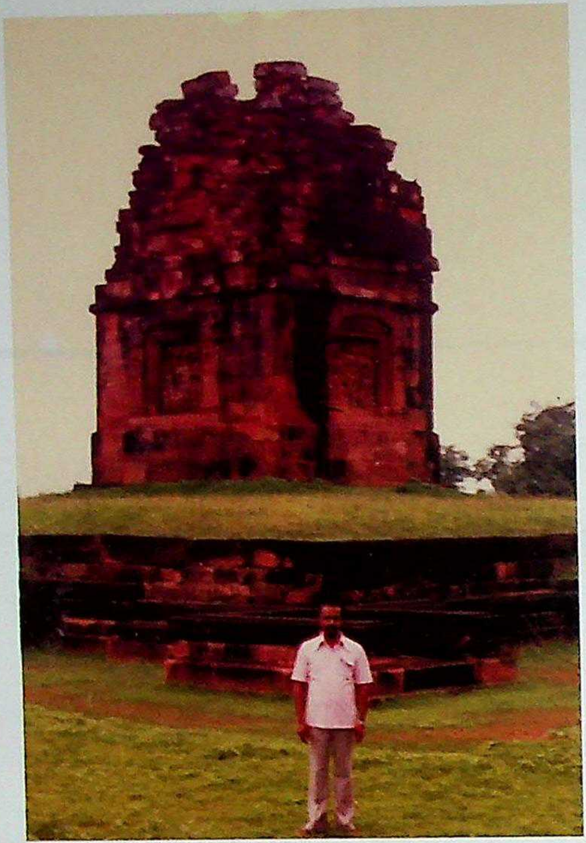
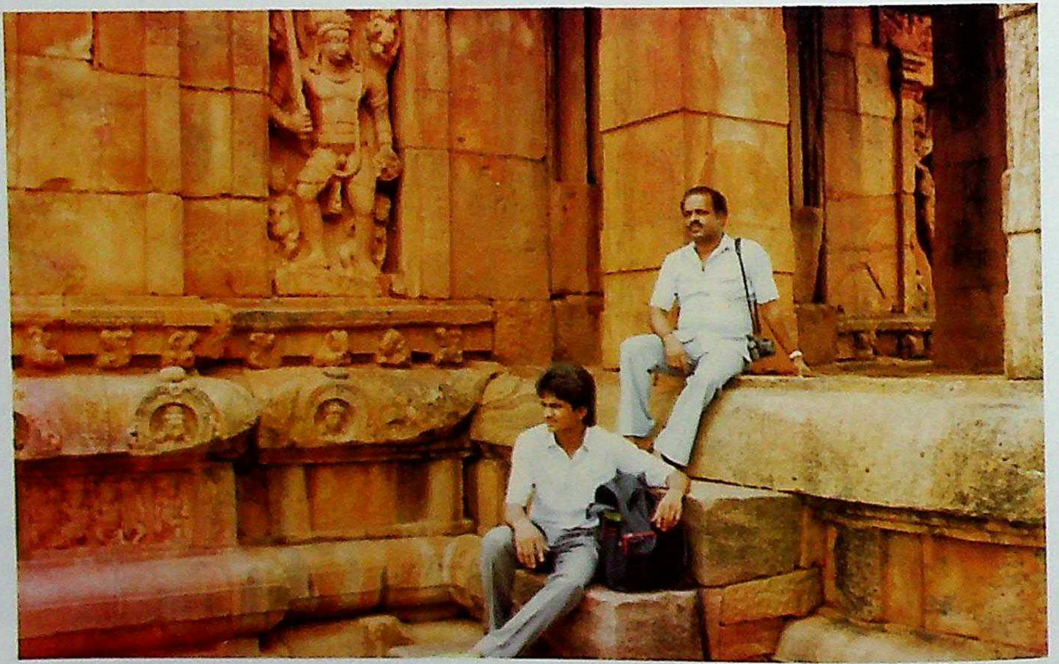
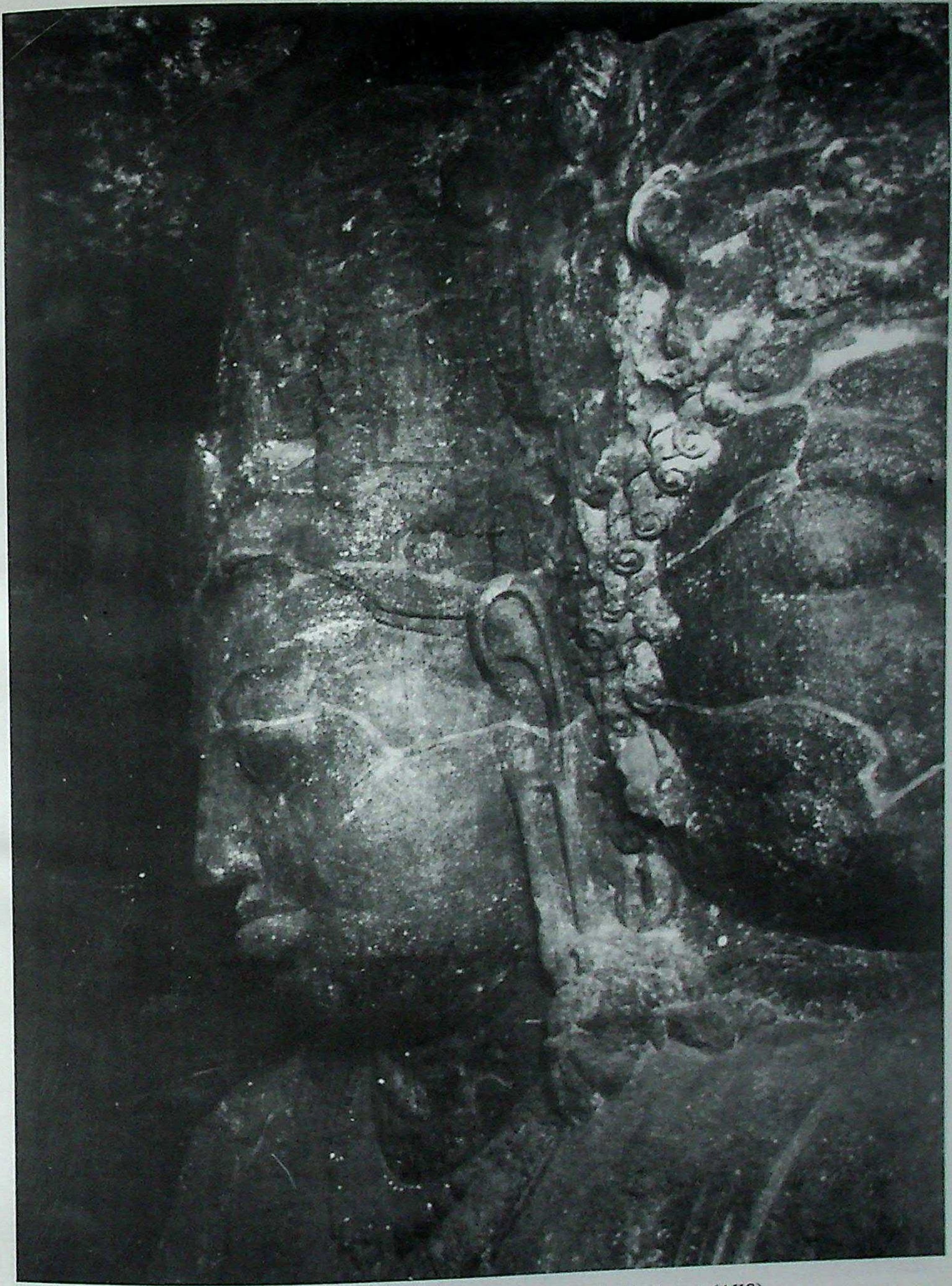
Pl. X.2. Seminar on Asian Studies, Hotel Furamo, Hong Kong (1988).



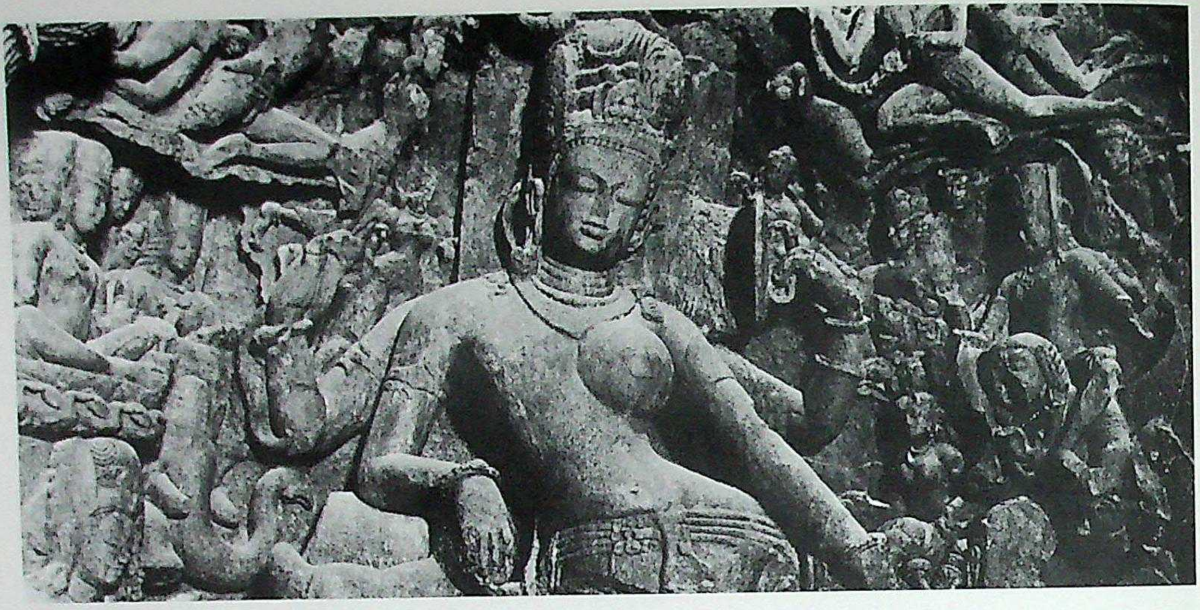
Pl. XI.1. The Daśāvatara temple at Deogarh.

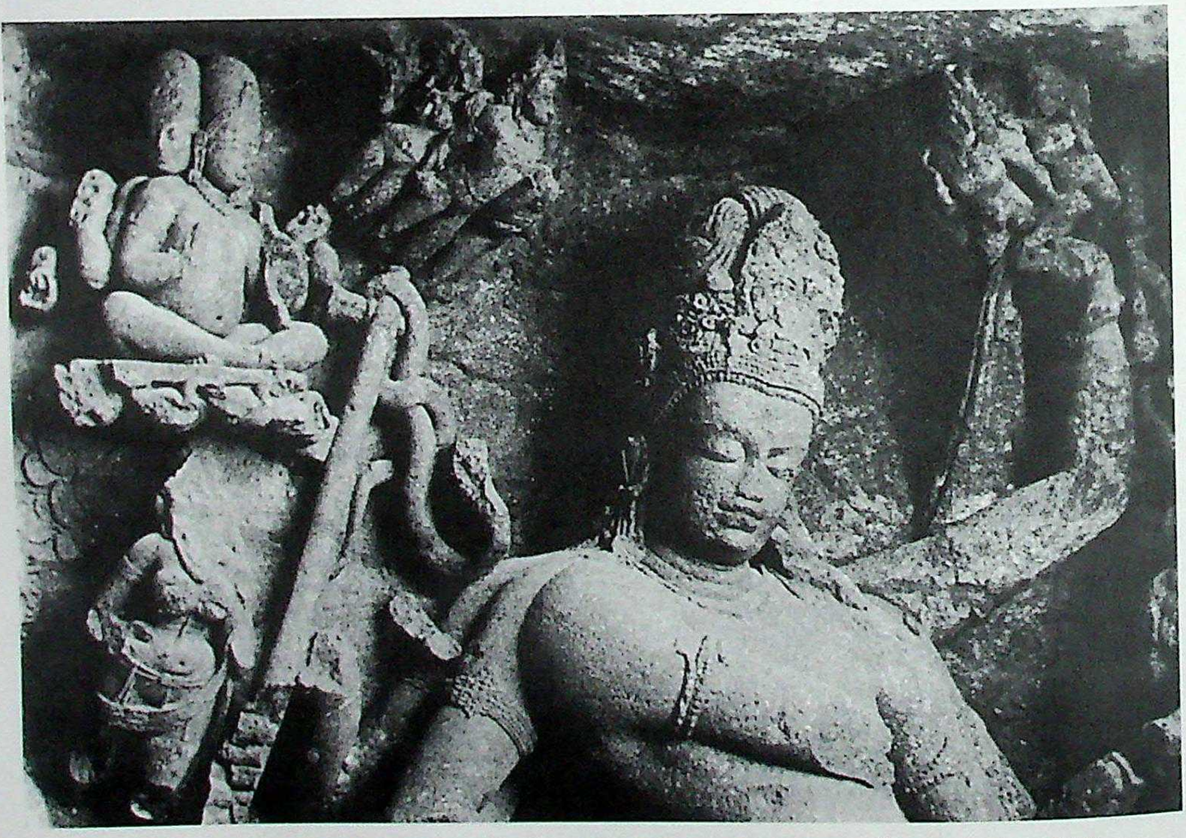


Pl. XI.2. The Malaghiṭṭi Śivālaya at Badāmī.

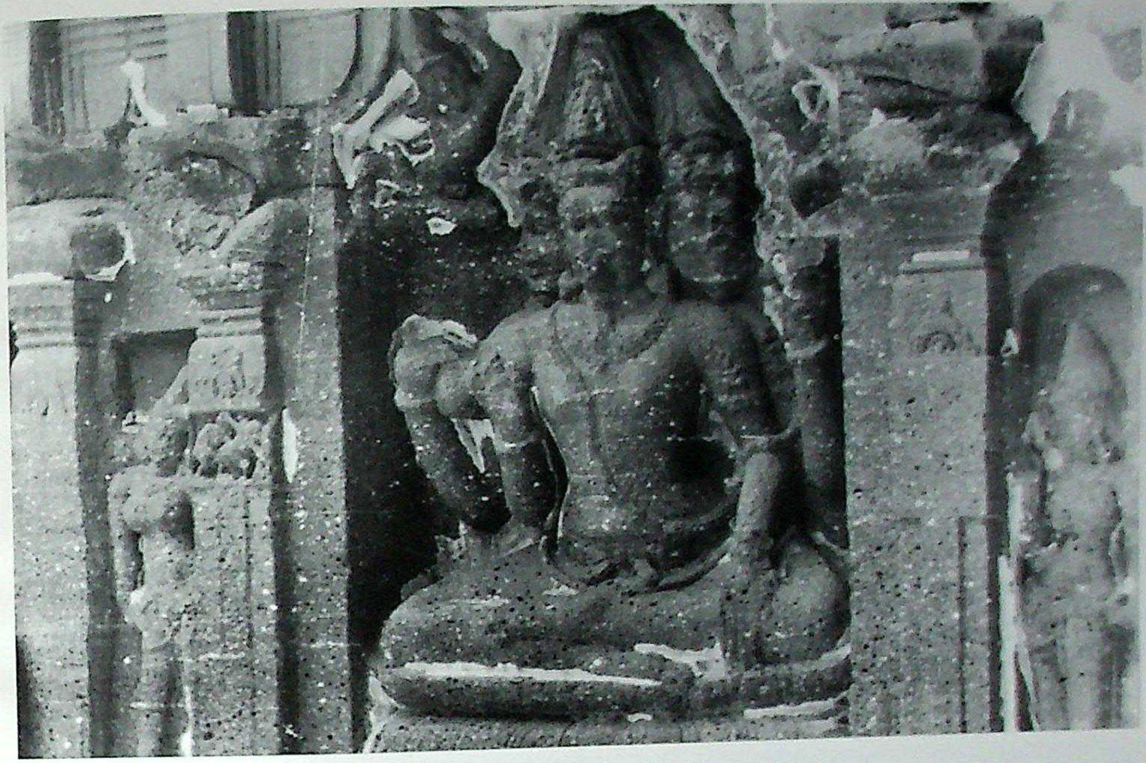


Pl. XII. The face of Brahmā, Trimūrti triptych, Elephanta (AIIS).

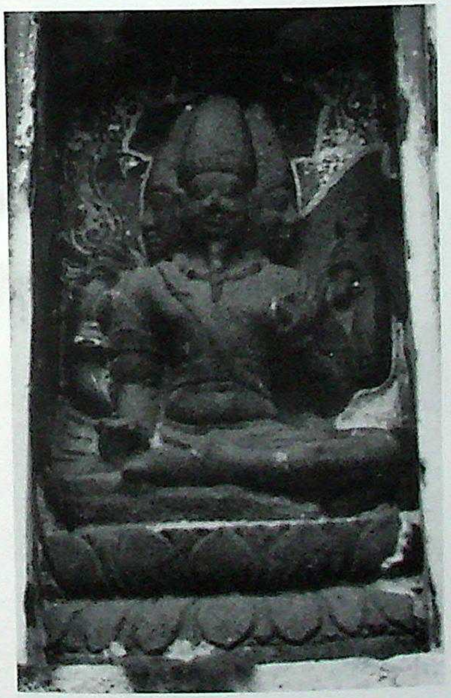




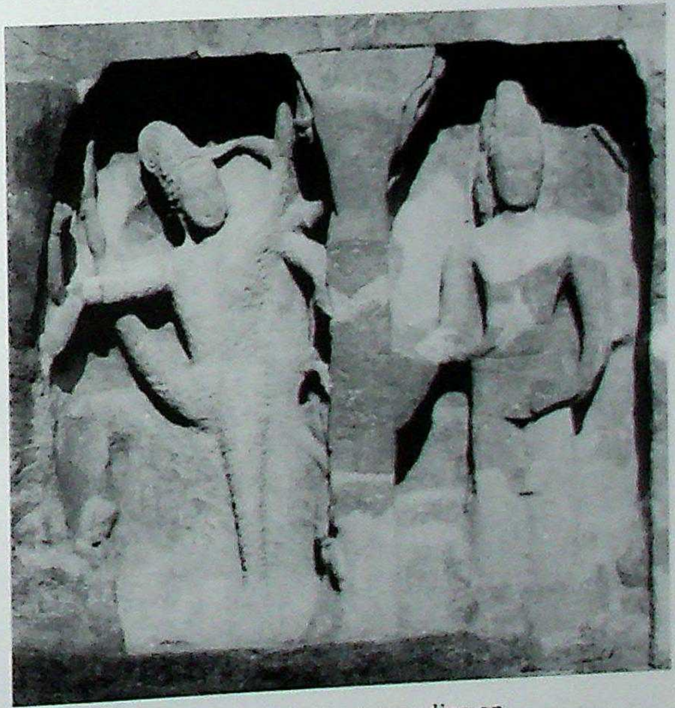
Pl. XIII. Elephanta: 1. Brahmā (right) in Ardhanārīśvara; 2. Brahmā in Śiva-Naṭarāja (AIIS).



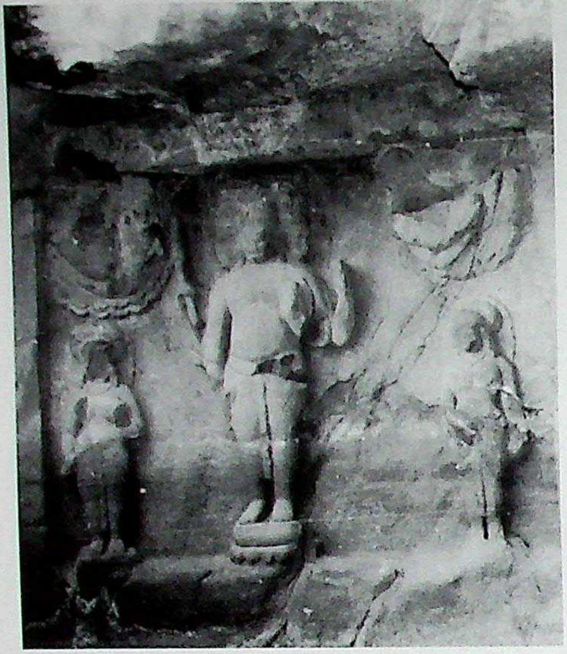
Pl. XIV.1. Ellora, Cave XVI: Brahmā.



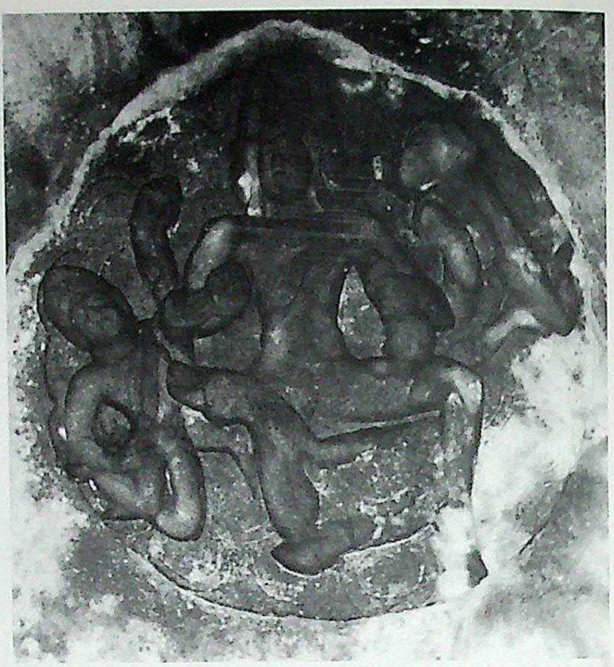
Pl. XIV.2. Ellora, Cave XVI: Brahmā.



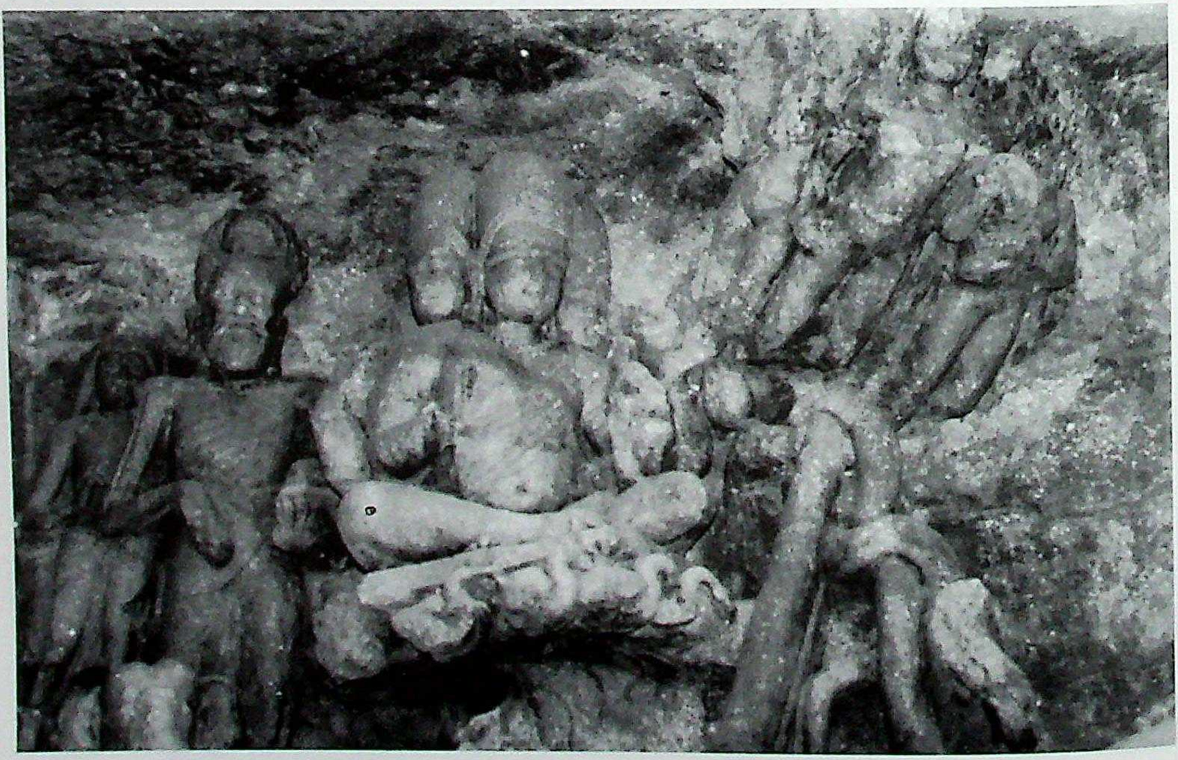
Pl. XV.1. Brahmā attending on Ūrdhvatāṇḍava-Śiva, Cave XVI, Ellora.



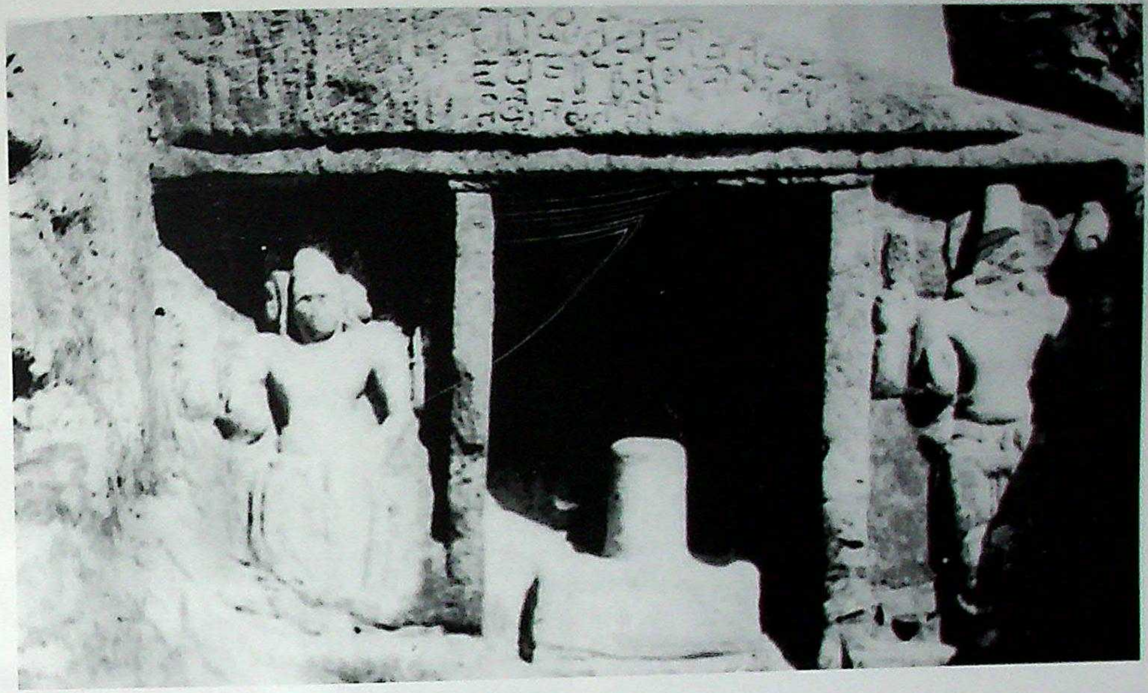
Pl. XV.2. Brahmā, Cave XVII, Ellora.

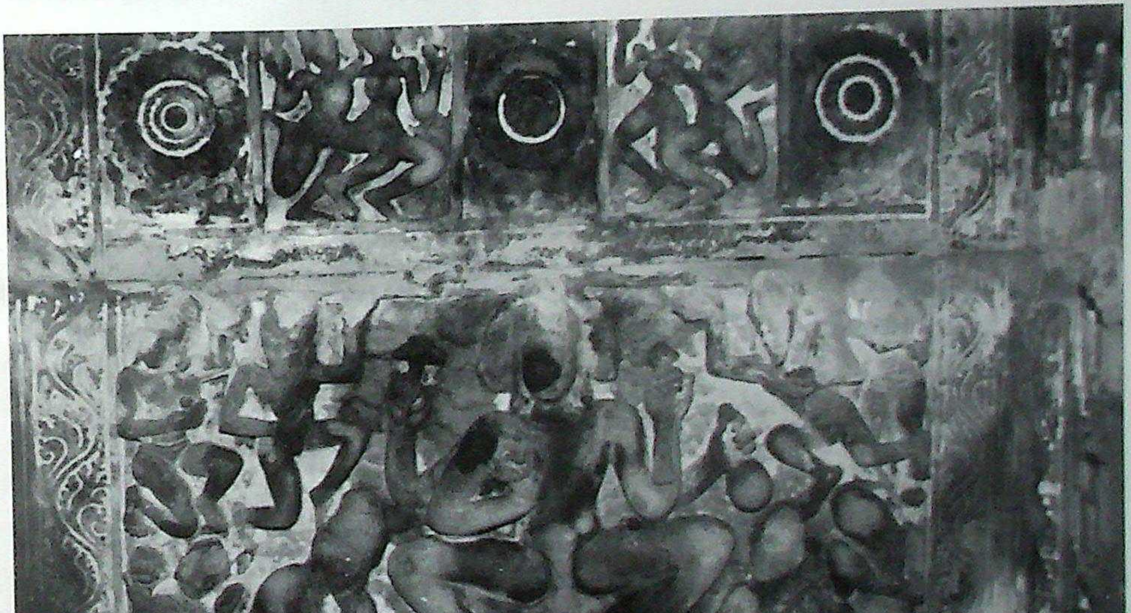


Pl. XVI.1. Brahmā, ceiling panels, Aihole.

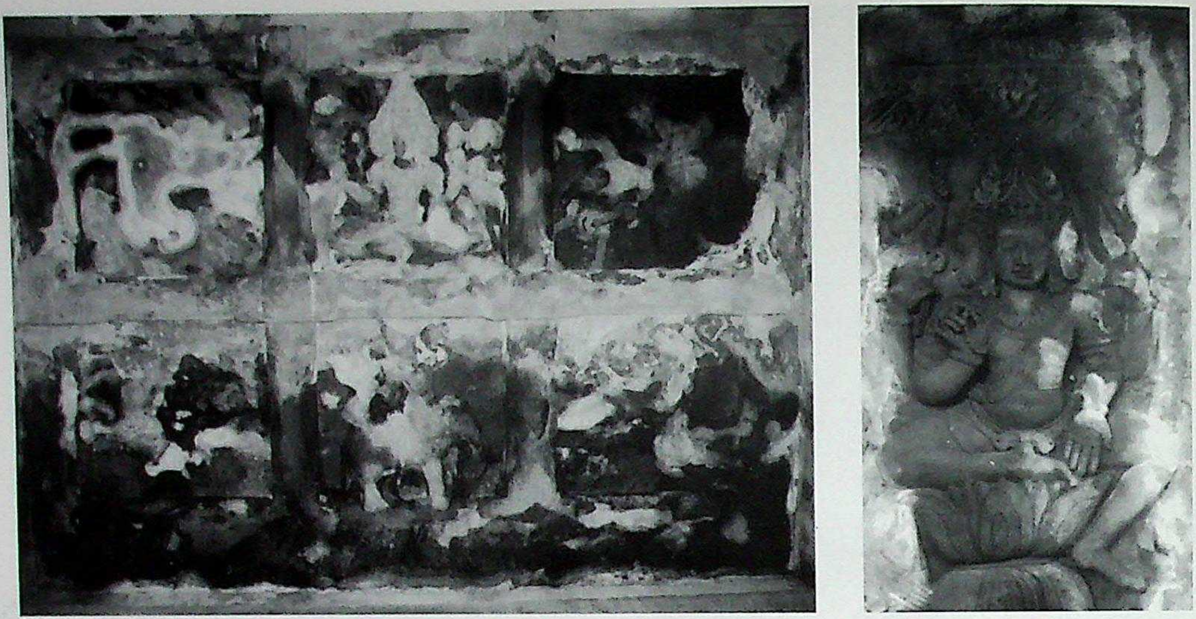


Pl. XVI.2. Brahmā, ceiling panels, Aihole.

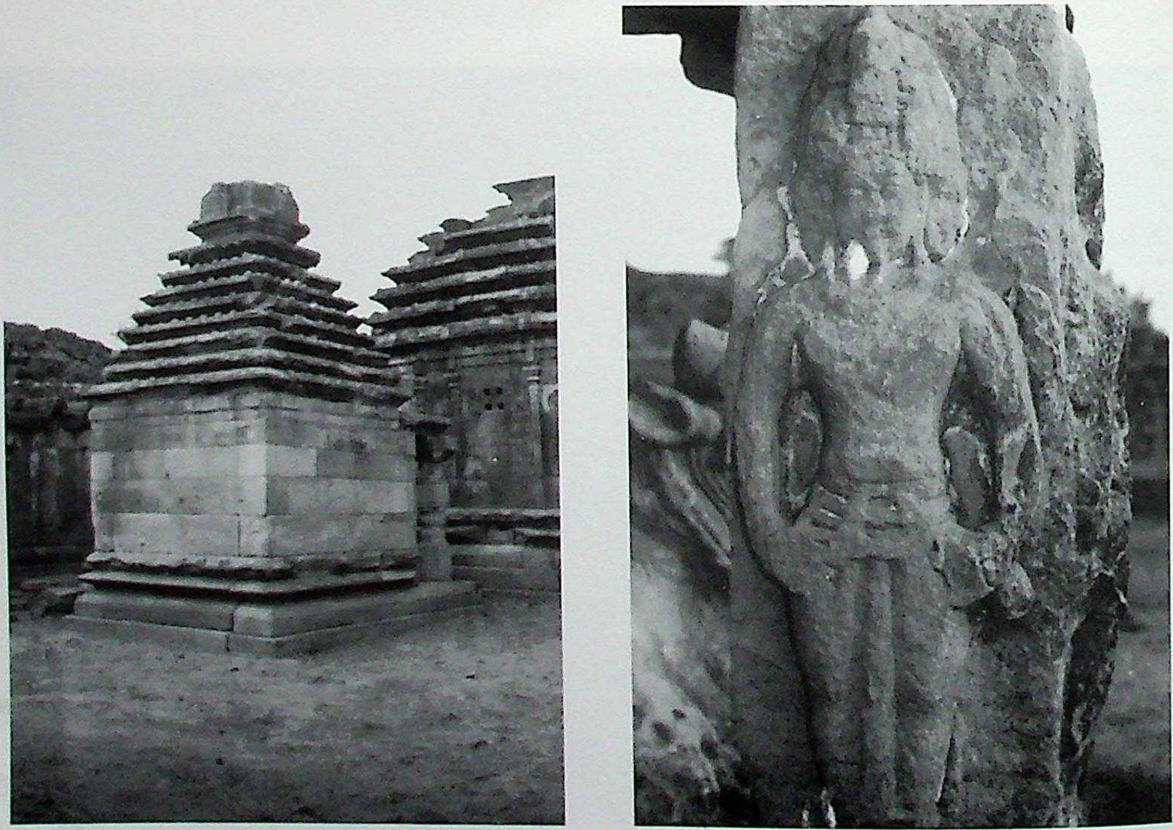




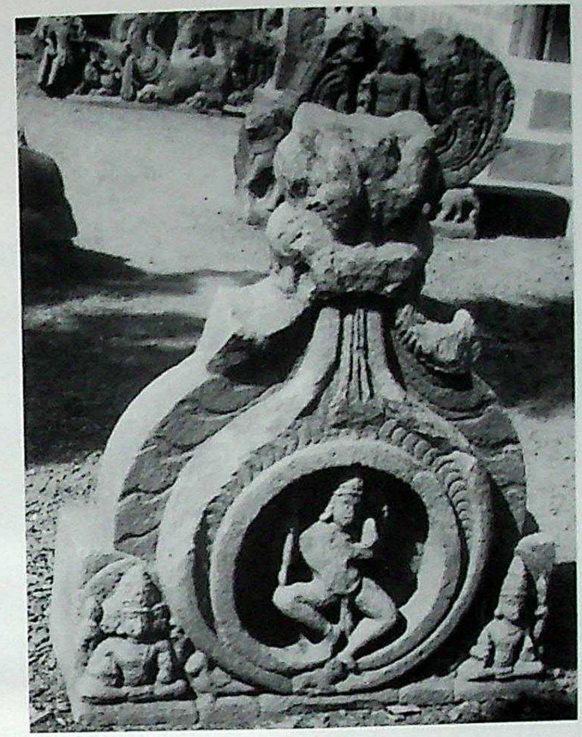
Pl. XVII.1. Brahmā in Model Shrine, Bhūtanātha complex, Badāmī;
2. Brahmā on ceiling, Hucchapayya-*maṭha* temple, Aihole (RKKR).

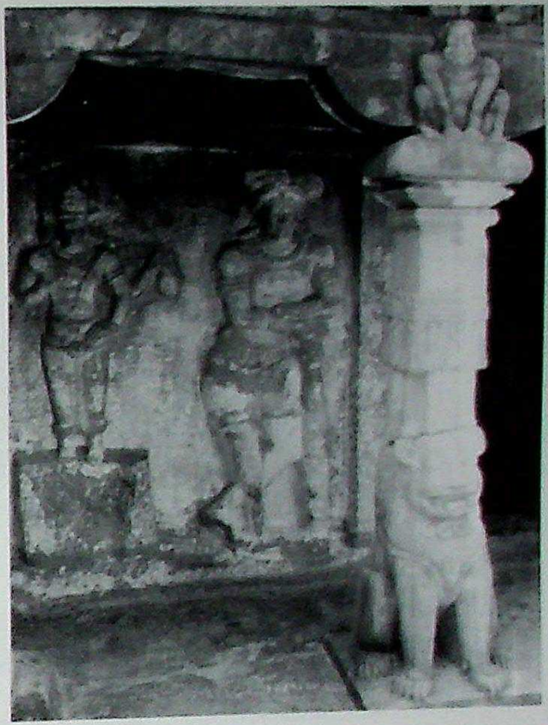


Pl. XVIII.1-2. Brahmā on ceiling, Kont-*guḍi* complex, Aihole (RKKR).

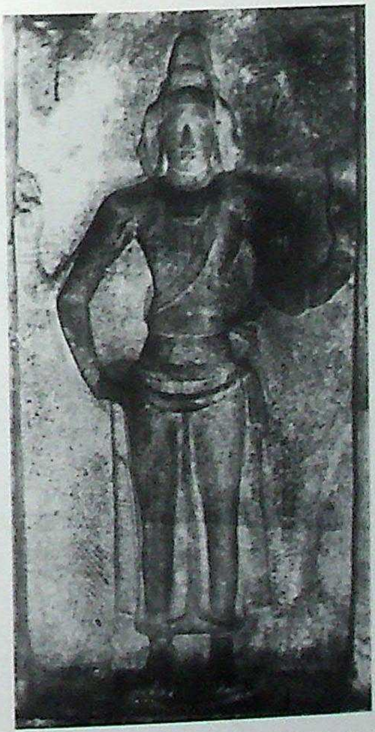


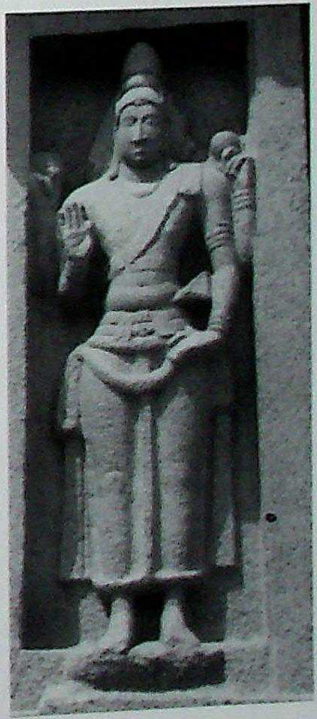
Pl. XIX. Aihole: 1. *Kadamba-nāgara* style, Basavanna temple;
2. Brahmā on pillar, Jyotirliṅga temple (RKKR).



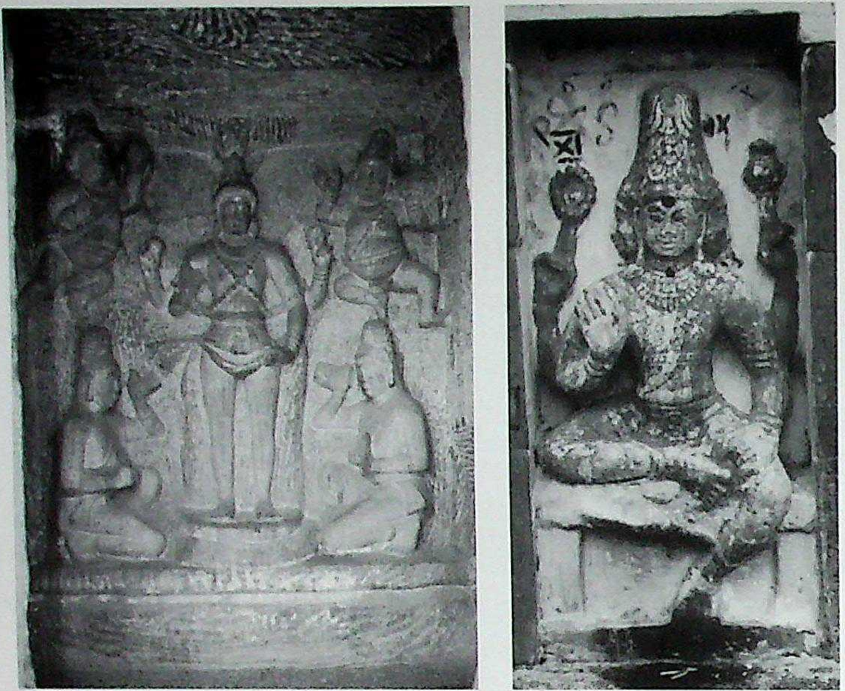


Pl. XX.1. Brahmā in *kuḍu*, Aihole Museum (RKKR); 2. Brahmā adjoining cella Bhairavakoṇḍa.

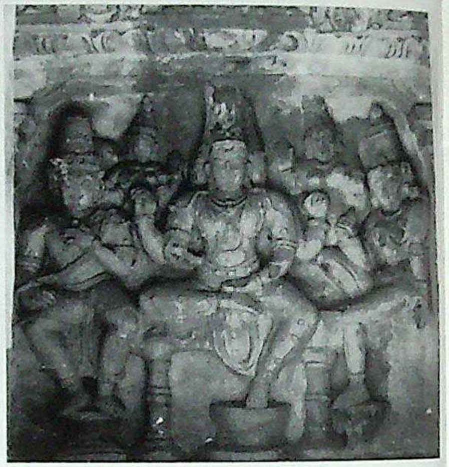




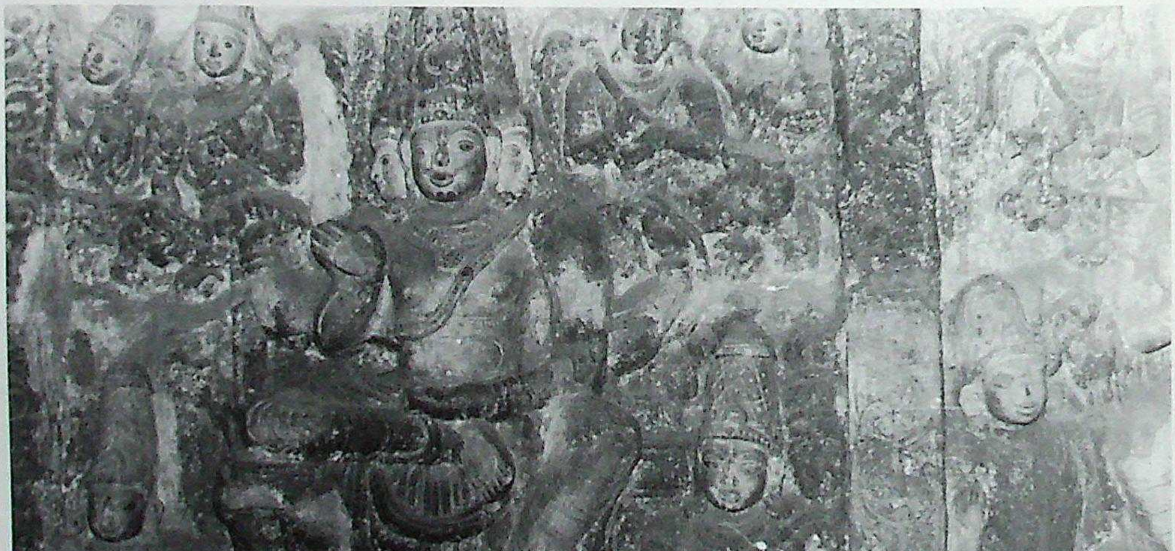
Pl. XXI. Māmallapuram: 1. Brahmā in niche, Ādivarāha-Viṣṇu-*gṛha*;
2. Brahmā in *devakoṣṭha*, Dharmarāja-*ratha* (RKKR).



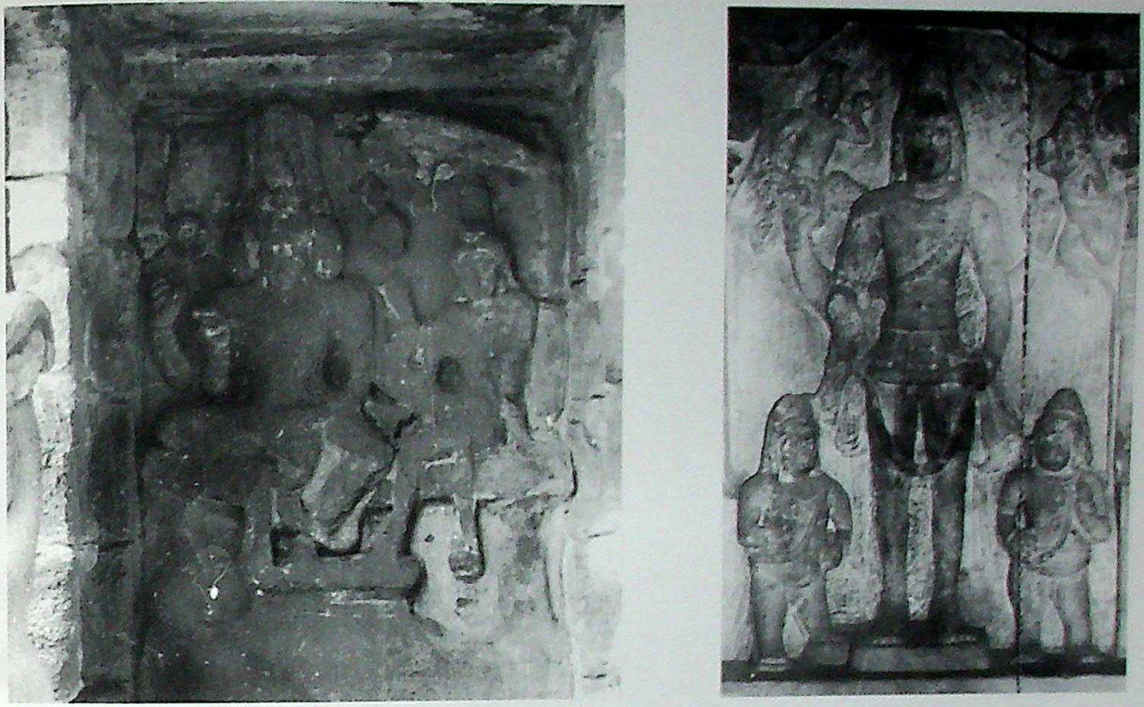
Pl. XXII.1. Brahmasāsta in cella, Trimūrti-*maṇḍapa*, Māmallapuram;
2. Brahmā in *devakoṣṭha*, Bhaktavatsala temple,
Tirukkaḻukkuṉṟam (RKKR).



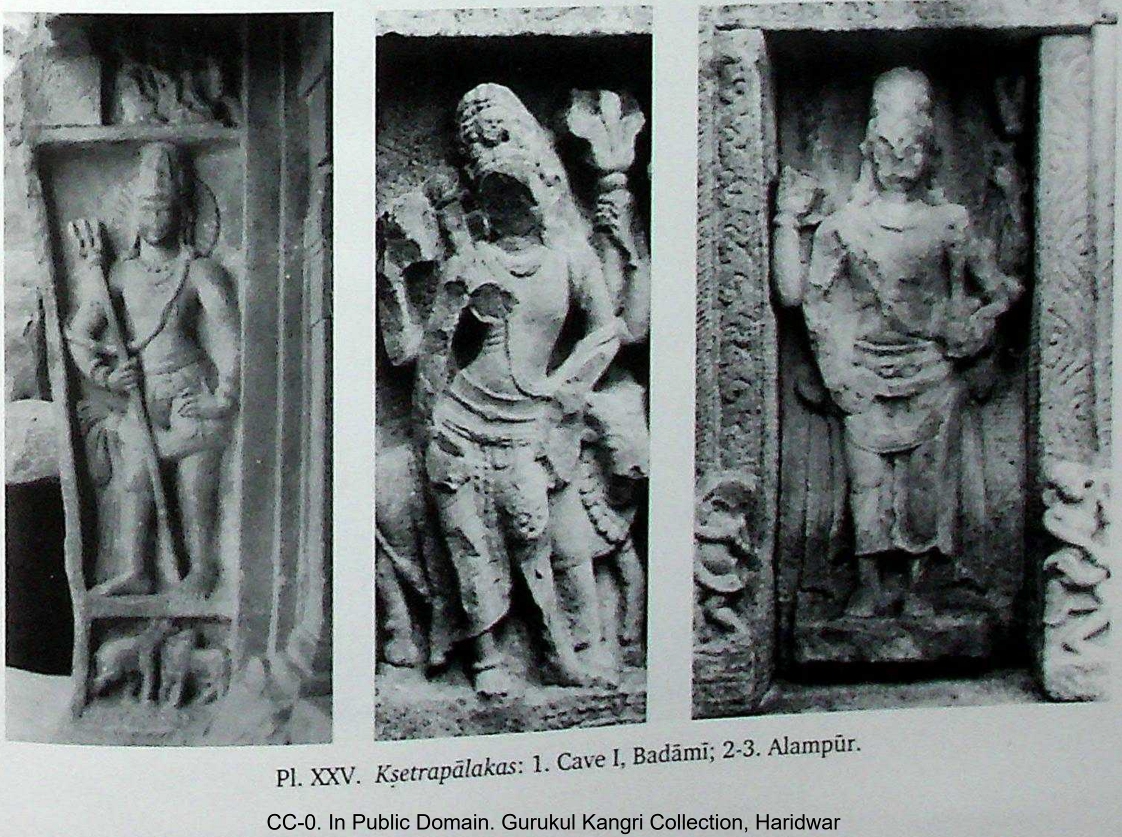
Pl. XXIII.2. Kāñci: Brahmā in
devakuḷika, Kailāsanātha temple.



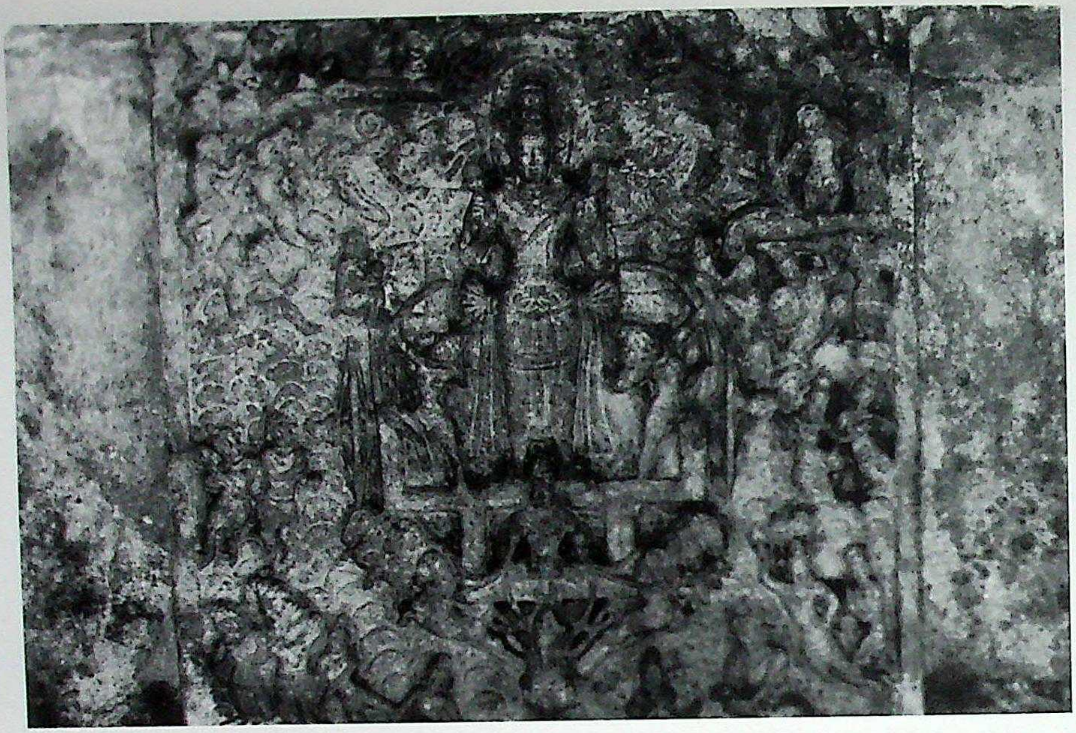
Pl. XXIII.1. Kāñci: Brahmā among Historical Sculptures, Vaikuṇṭha Perumaḷ temple.



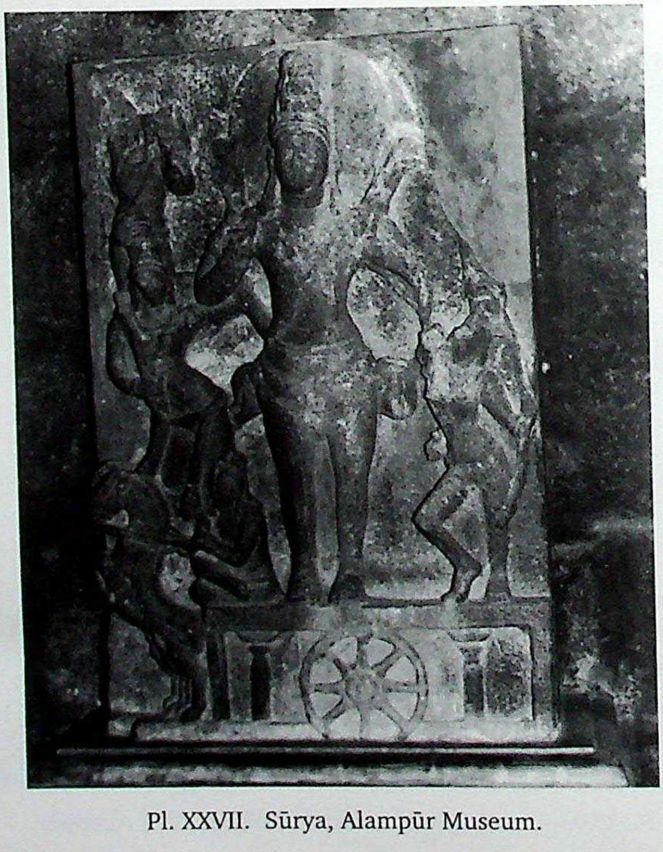
Pl. XXIV.1. Brahmā in *devakuḷika*, Kailāsanātha, Kāñci; 2. Brahmā, Tiruccirāppaḷḷi lower cave.



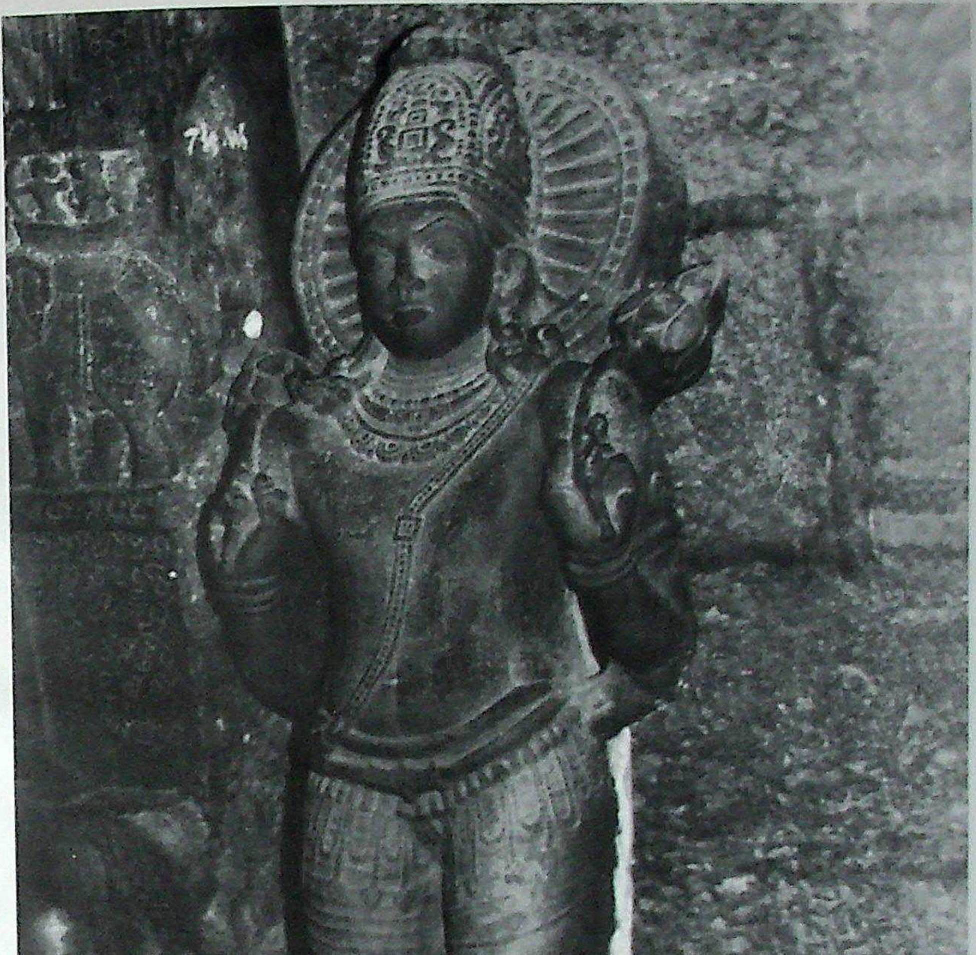
Pl. XXV. *Kṣetrapālakas*: 1. Cave I, Badāmī; 2-3. Alampūr.



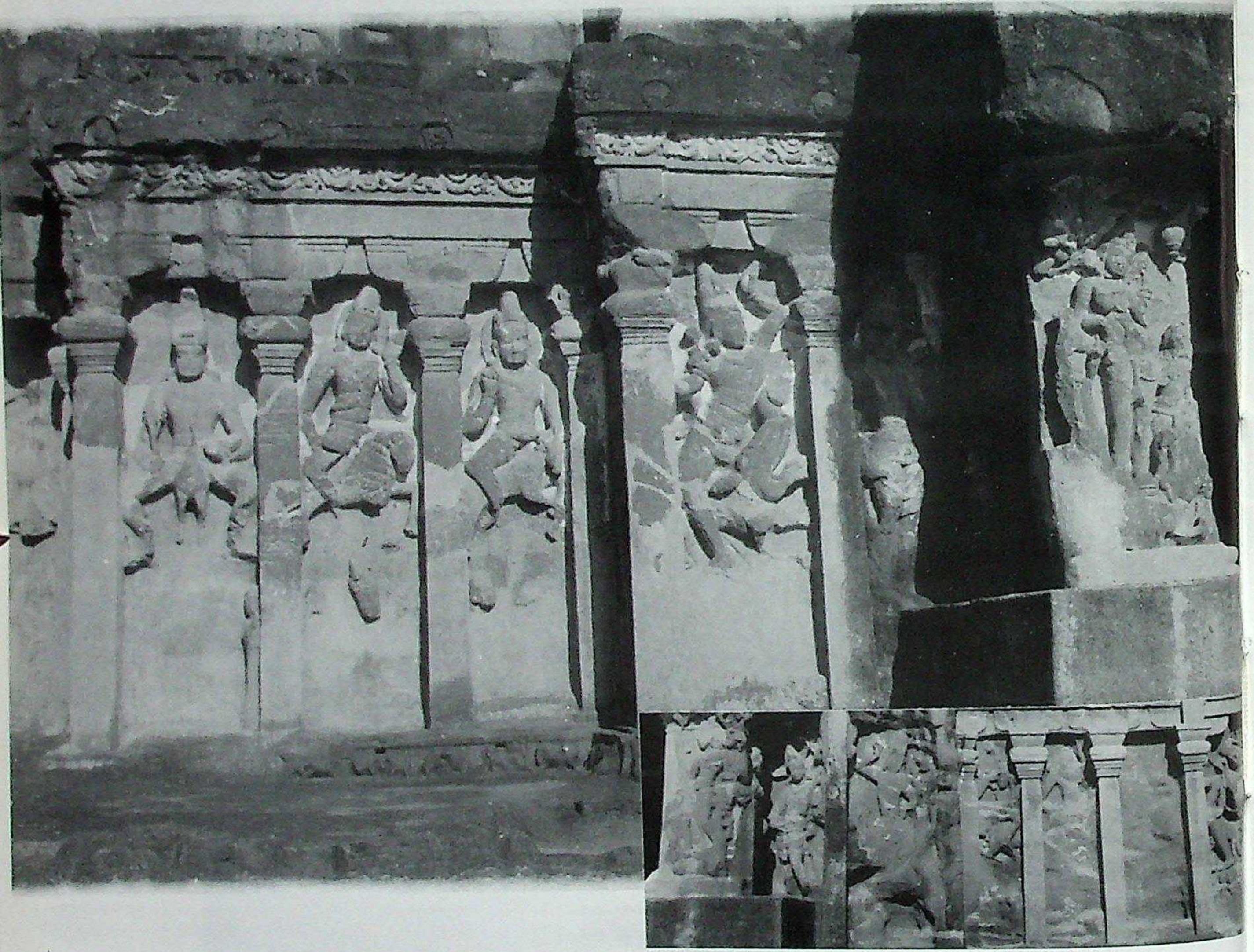
Pl. XXVI. Sūrya on ceiling, Virūpākṣa temple, Paṭṭadakkal.



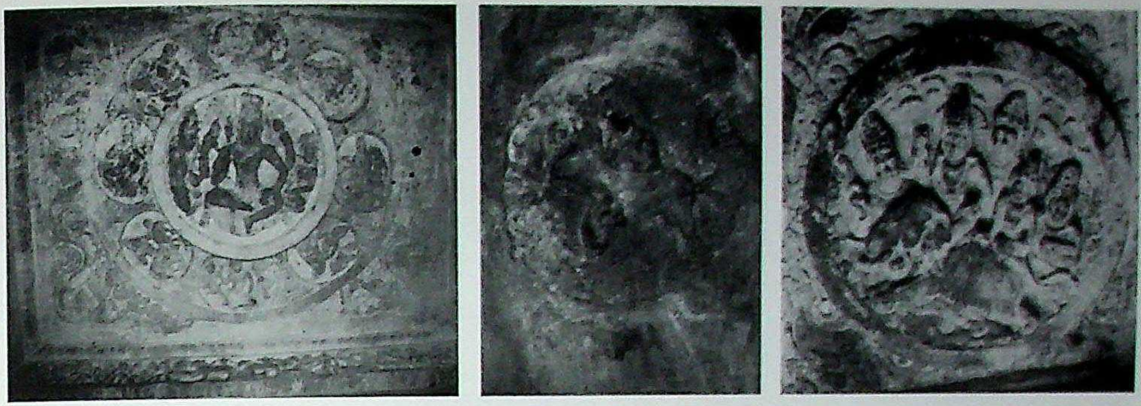
Pl. XXVII. Sūrya, Alampūr Museum.



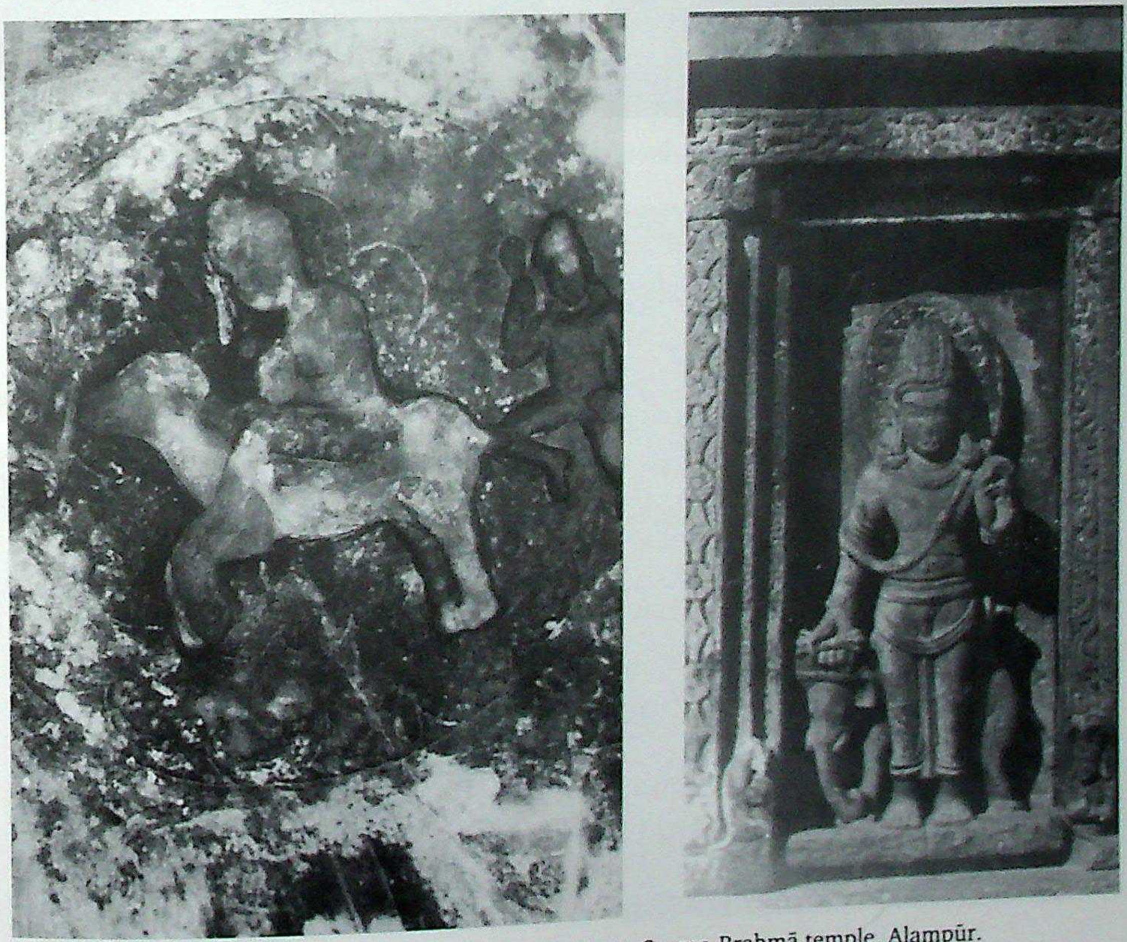
Pl. XXVIII. Sūrya, Alampūr Museum.



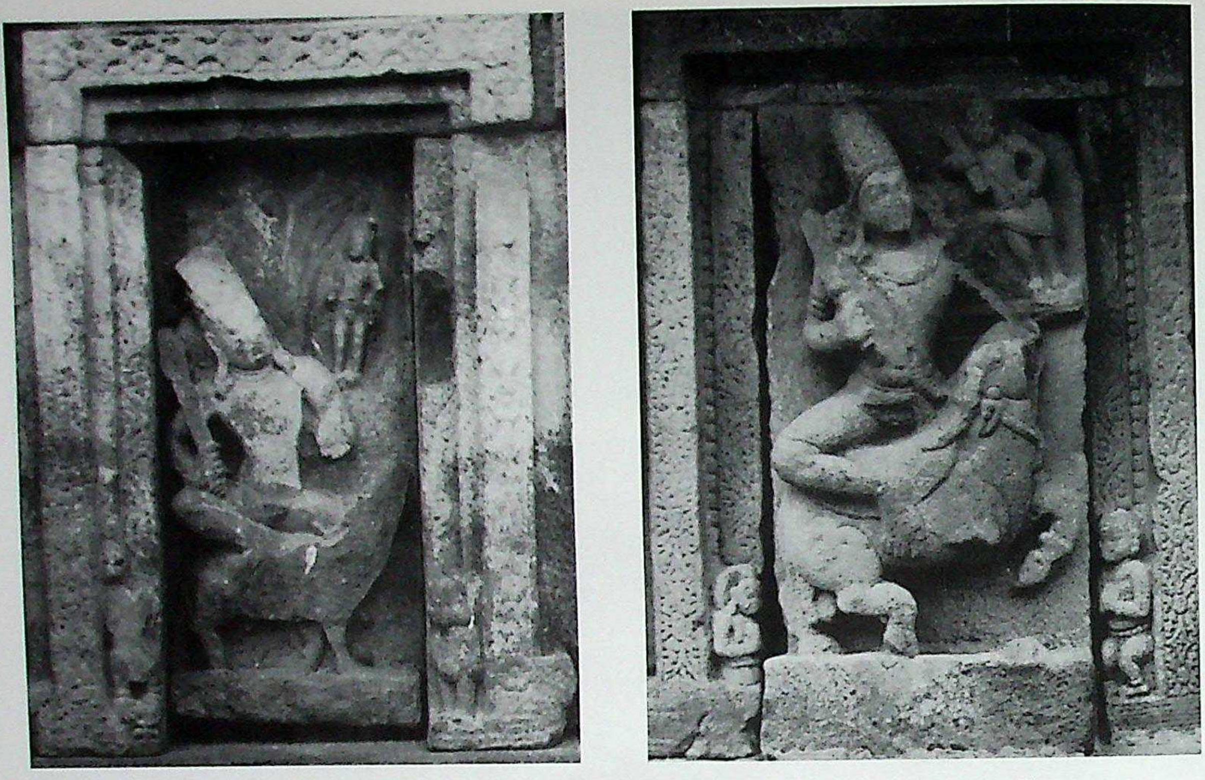
Pl. XXIX. *Dikpālakas*, *Facade*, Kailāsa, Ellora.



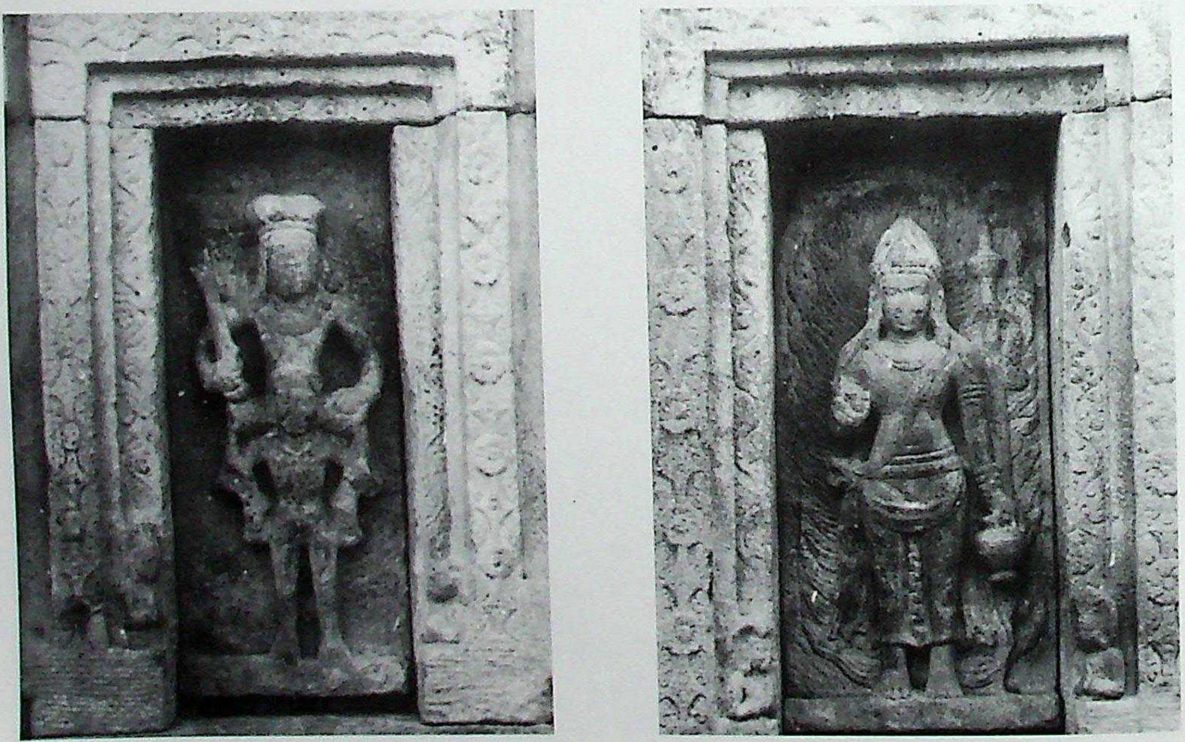
Pl. XXX. Badāmī: 1. Viṣṇu in centre and *dikpālakas*, Badāmī, Cave III; 2. Kubera, Cave III, Badāmī; 3. Indra, Rāvulaphaḍi cave, Aihole.



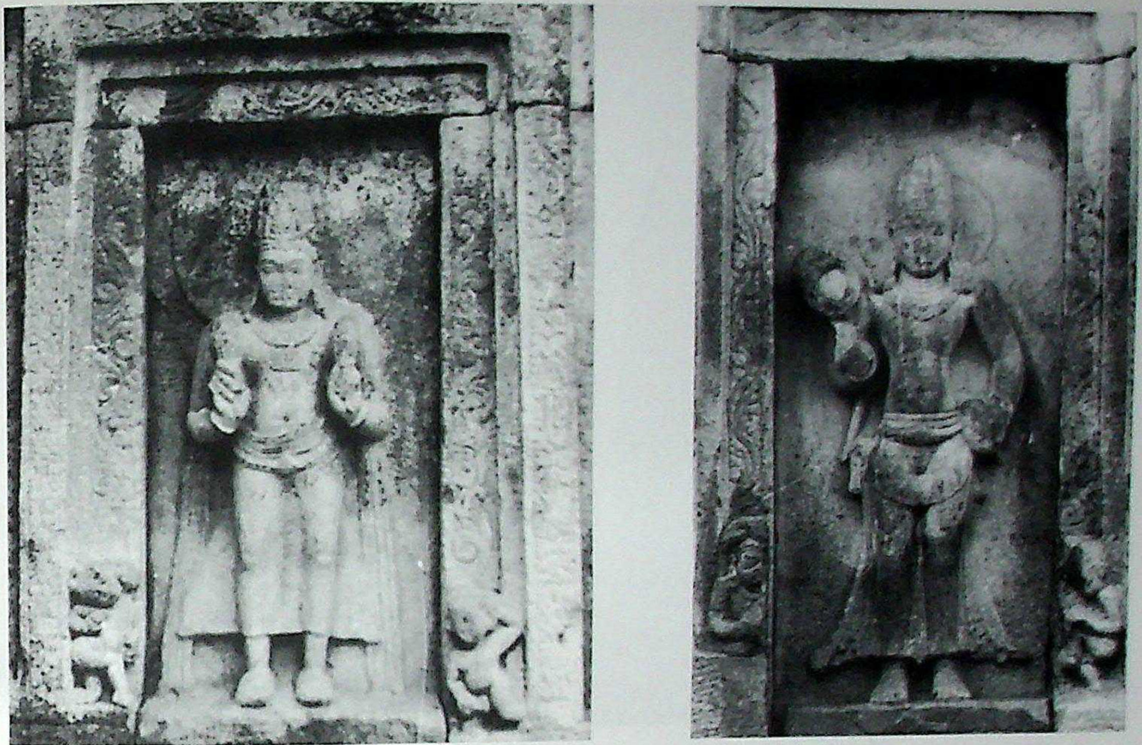
Pl. XXXI.1. Agni, Cave III, Badāmī; 2. Sūrya, Svarga-Brahmā temple, Alampūr.



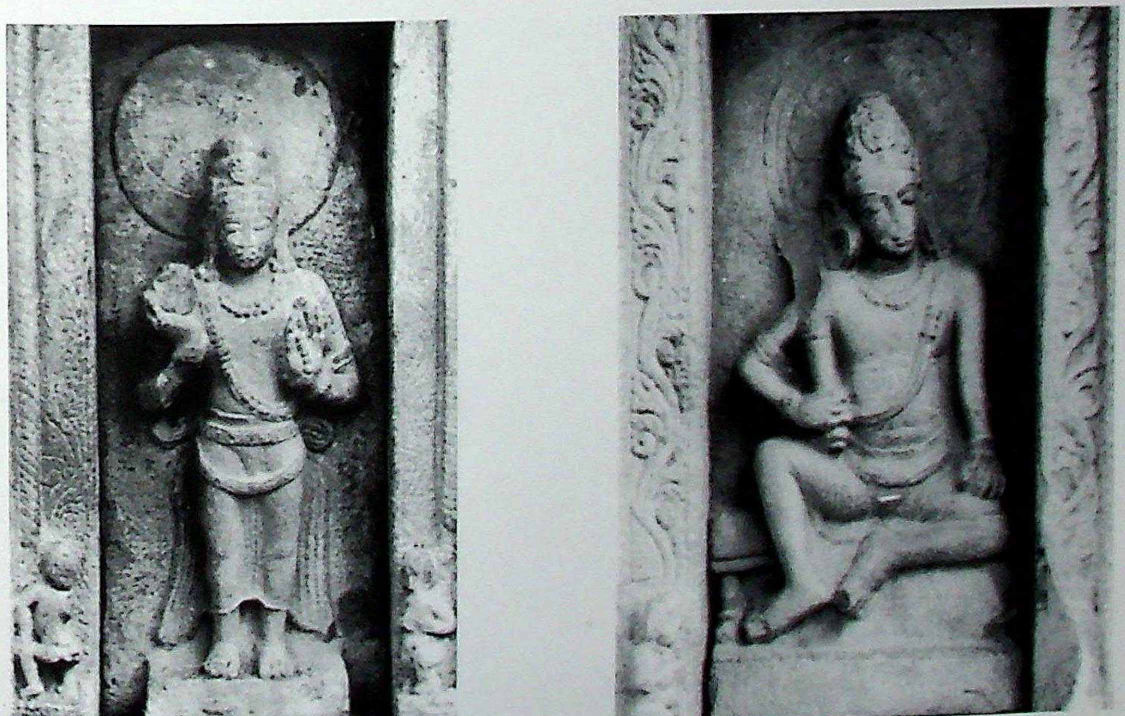
Pl. XXXII. Alampūr, Yama: 1. Svarga-Brahmā temple, 2. Visva-Brahmā temple.



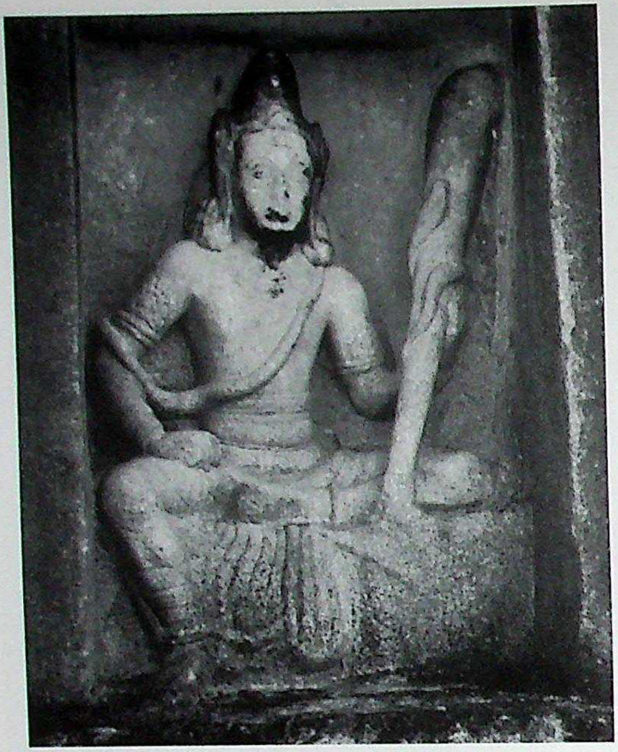
Pl. XXXIII. Alampūr, Svarga-Brahmā temple: 1. Nirṛtti, 2. Agni.



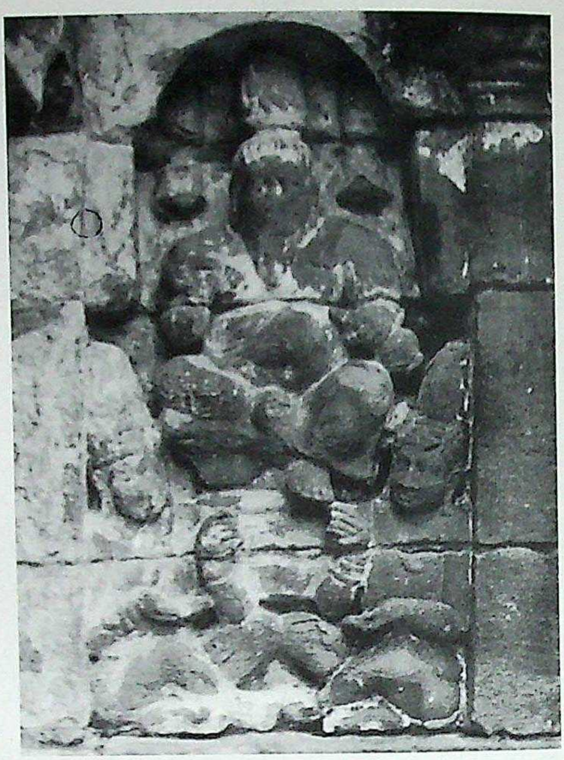
Pl. XXXIV. Alampūr, Svarga-Brahmā temple: 1. Sūrya, 2. Vāyu.



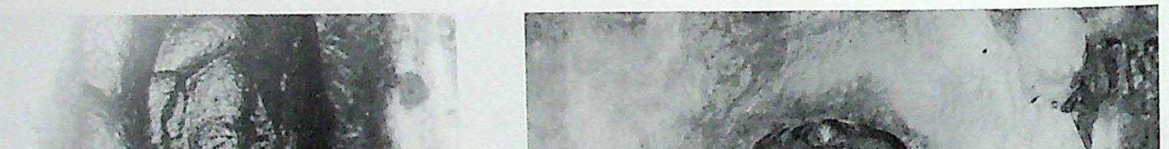
Pl. XXXV. Alampūr, Svarga-Brahmā temple: 1. Candra, 2. Kubera.



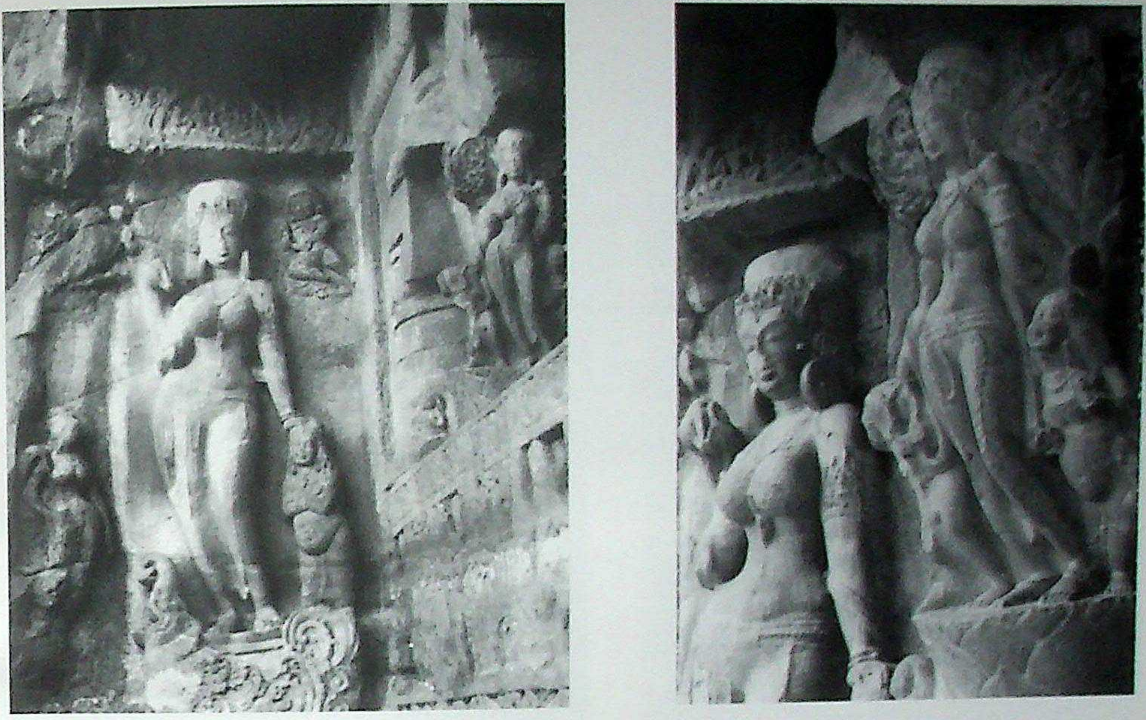
Pl. XXXVI. Caṇḍikeśvara, Ariṭṭāpaṭṭi cave (FII).



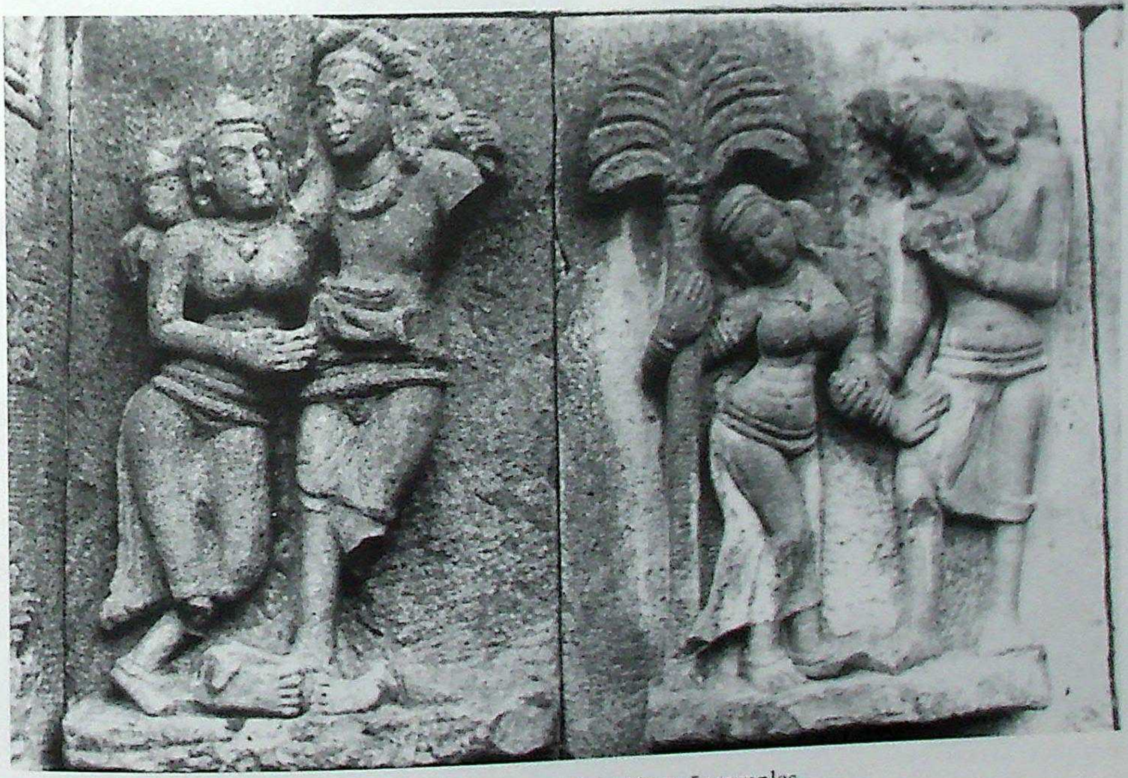
Pl. XXXVIII. Agastya, Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñci.



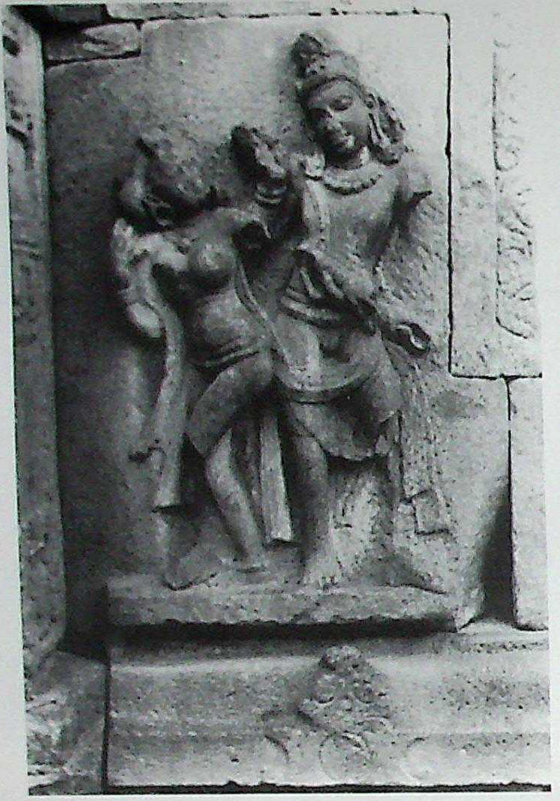
Pl. XXXVII. Caṇḍikeśvara: 1. Malaiyaṭippaṭṭi Vāgīśvara cave; 2. Kuṉṉakkuṭi cave annexure.



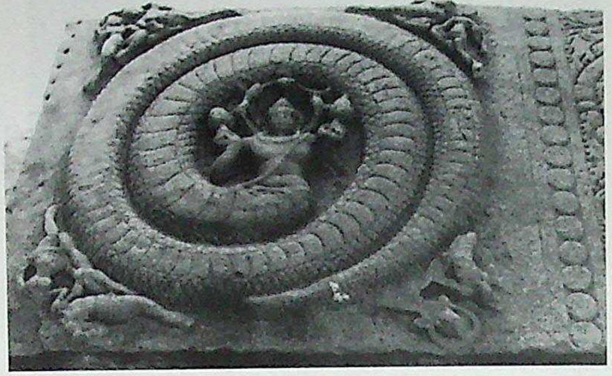
Pl. XXXIX. Ellora, Cave XXI: 1. Gaṅgā; 2. Yamunā.

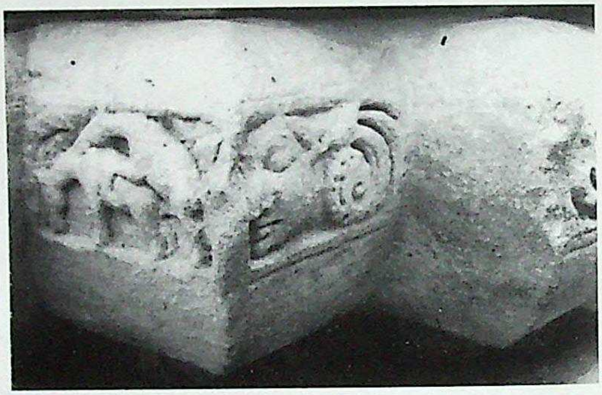


Pl. XL. Śṛṅgāra motifs in Alampūr temples.

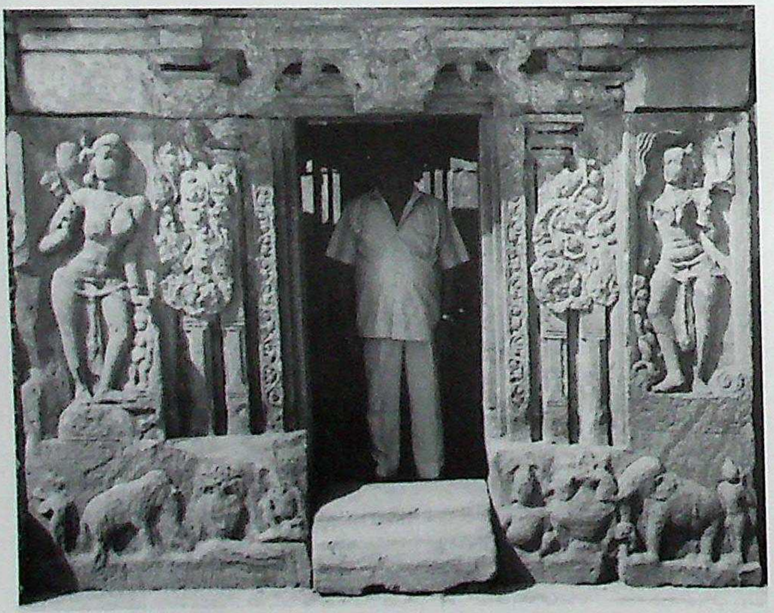


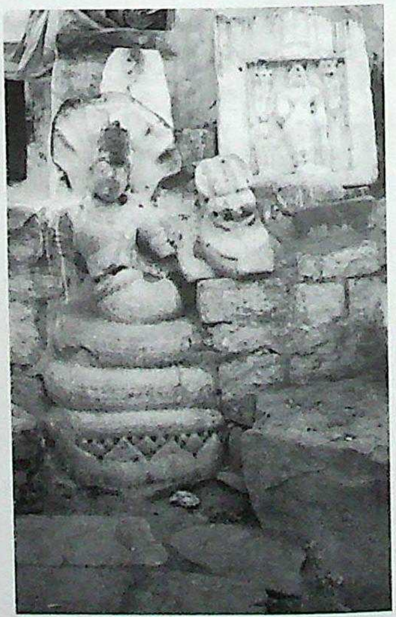
Pl. XL. Śṛṅgāra motifs in Alampūr temples.



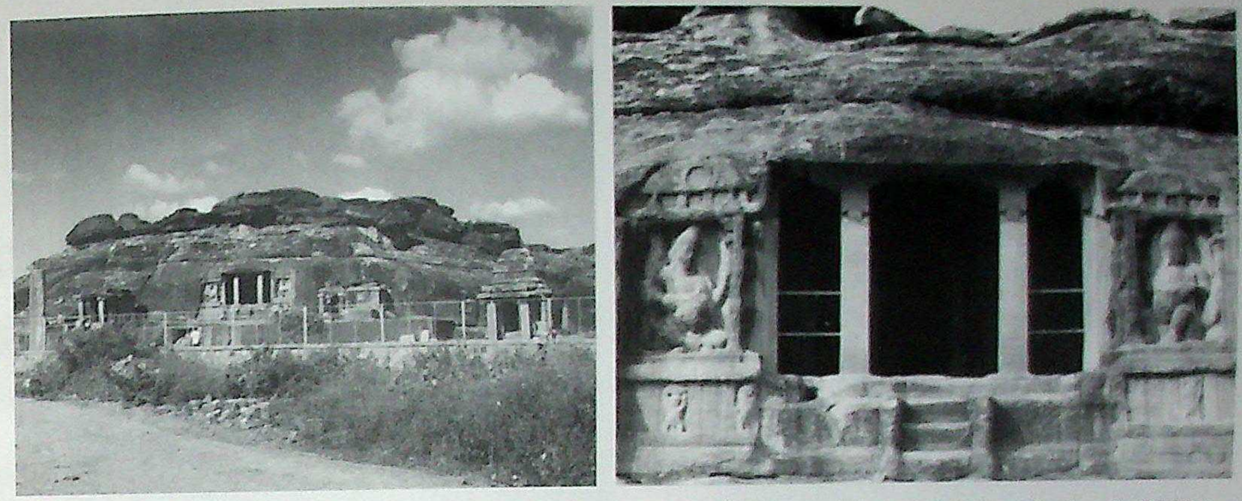


Pl. XLI.1. Coiled Ādiśeṣa, Badāmī Museum; 2. Horses (Sūrya and Chāya) in union, Kāśi-Viśvanātha temple plinth, Paṭṭadakkal.

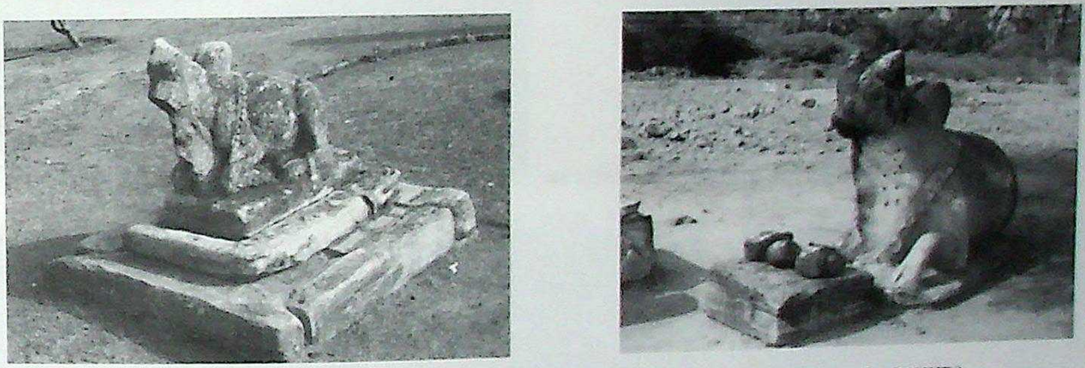




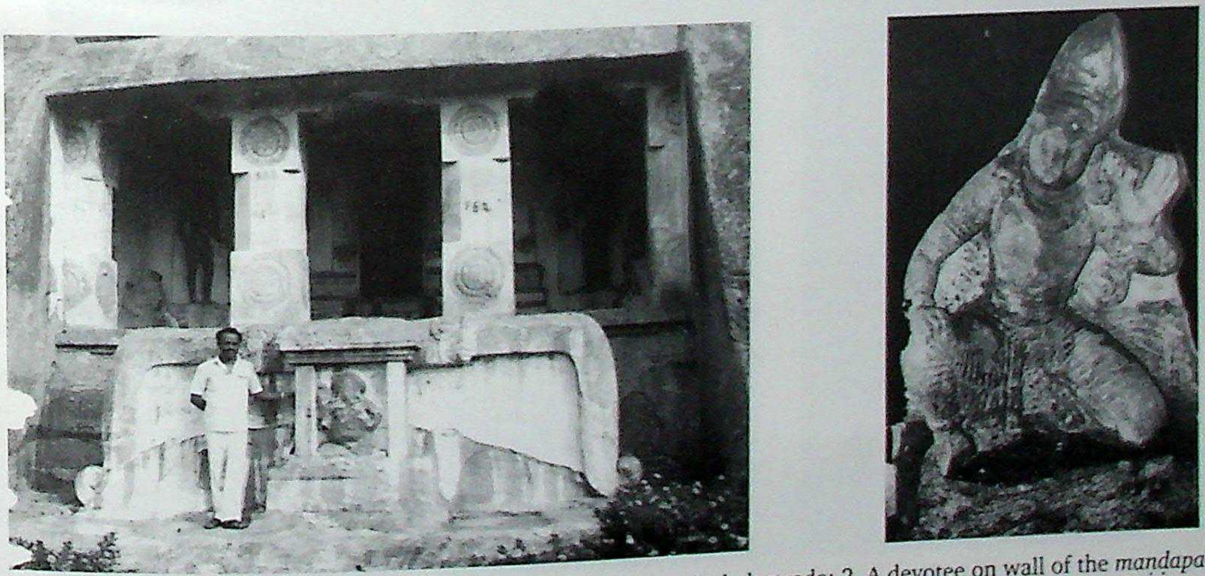
Pl. XLII. Aihole: 1. *Dvārapālikas*, *pūrṇakumbhas*, Nidhis and elephants on doorjam, Aralibasavanna temple; 2. Stray Nāga in village (RKKR).



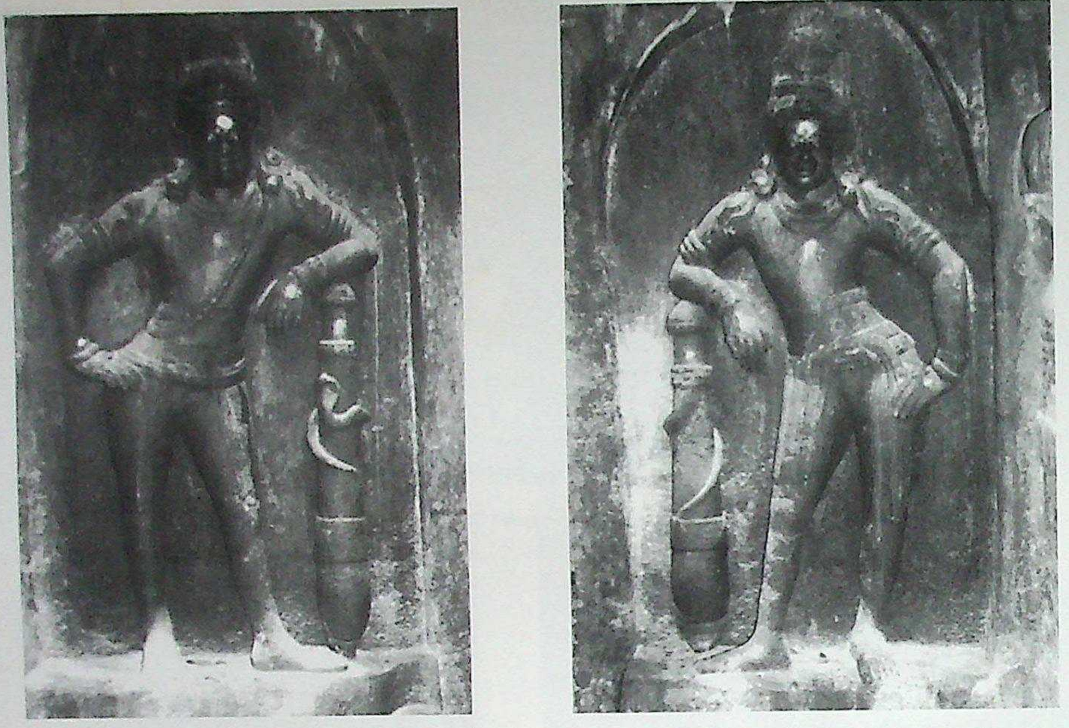
Pl. XLIII. Aihole, Rāvulaphaḍi cave temple: 1. Distant view; 2. Śaṅkha and Padma-Nidhis at the *facade* (RKKR).



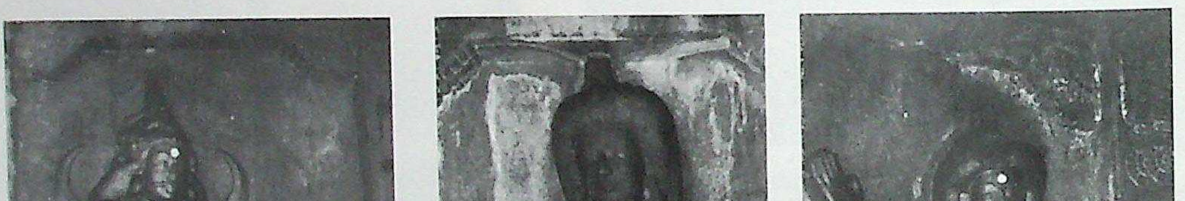
Pl. XLIV. Aihole, Nandi images: 1. Rāvulaphaḍi; 2. Tārabasappa temple (RKKR).



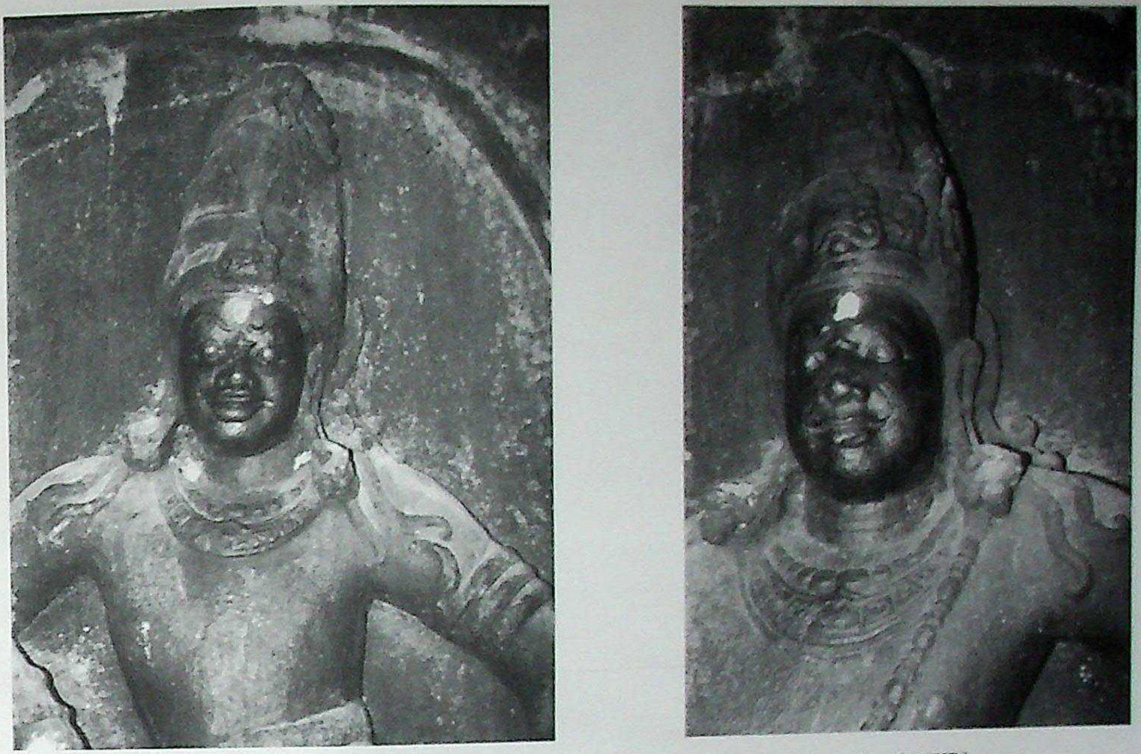
Pl. XLV. Āṉaimalai, Lāṭaṉkōyil for Murukaṉ: 1. Caṇḍikeśvara on the balustrade; 2. A devotee on wall of the *maṇḍapa*.



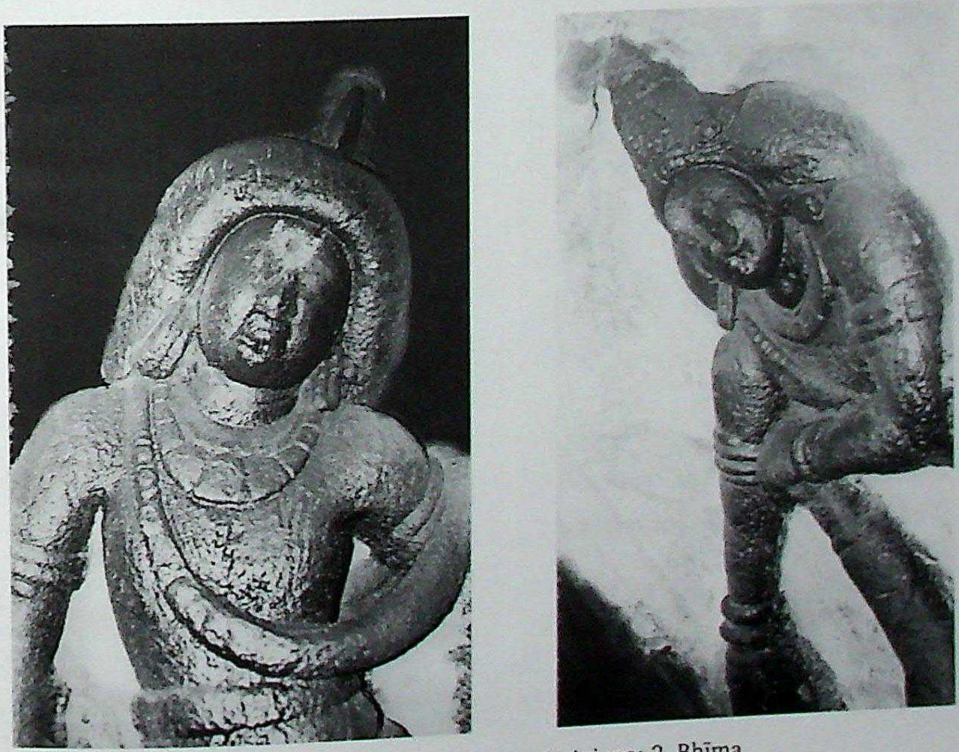
Pl. XLVI. Tirumeyyam, Śiva cave: 1-2. *Dvārapālakas* (RKKR).



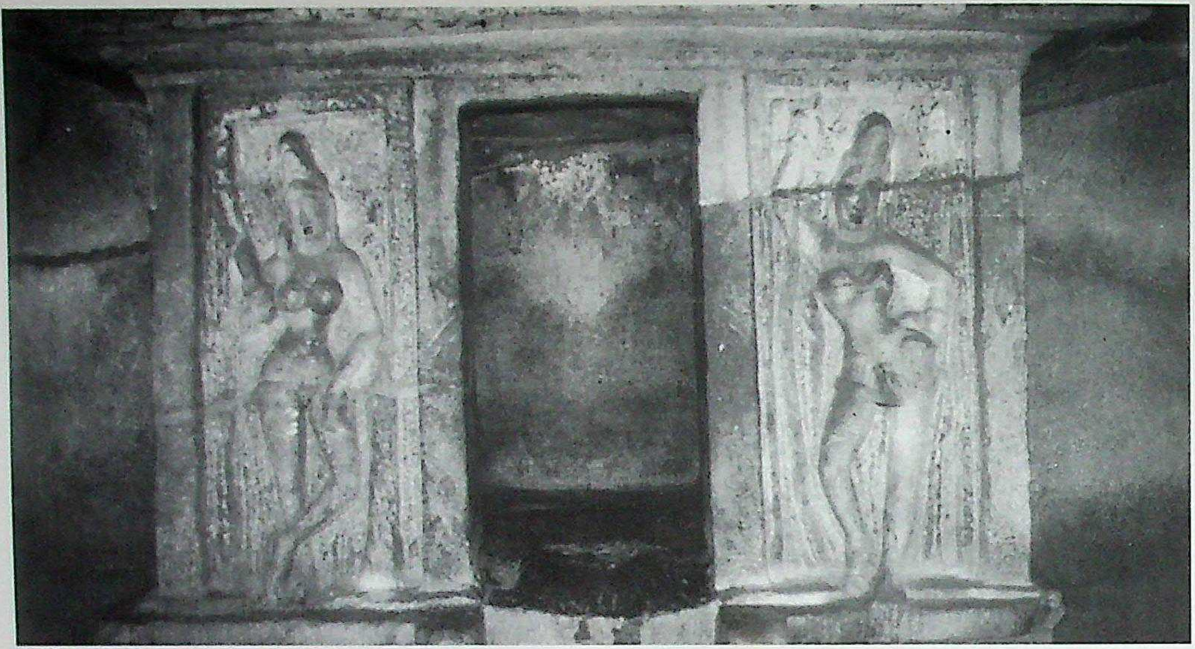
Pl. XLVII.1-3. *Dvārapālakas*, Putukkōṭṭai cave temples (RKKR).



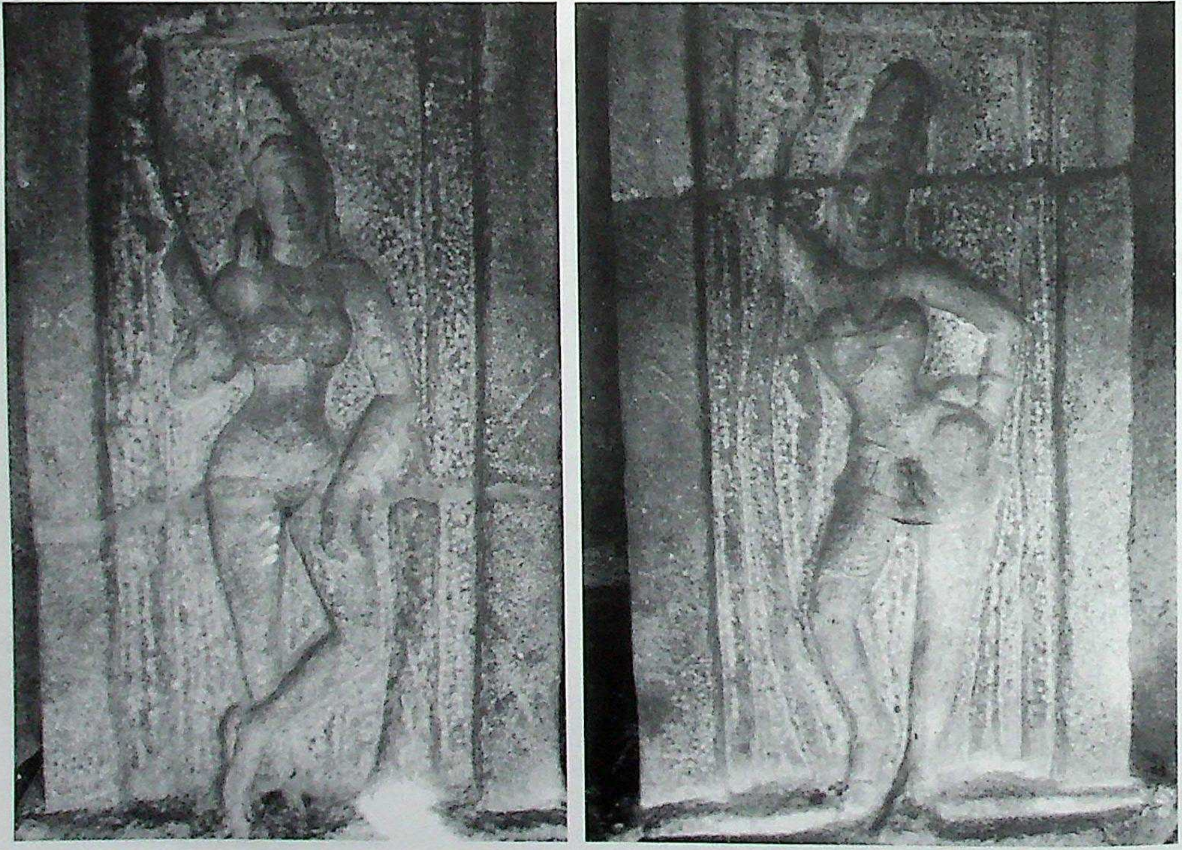
Pl. XLVIII.1-2. Close up of *Dvārapālakas*, Putukkōṭṭai cave temples (RKKR).



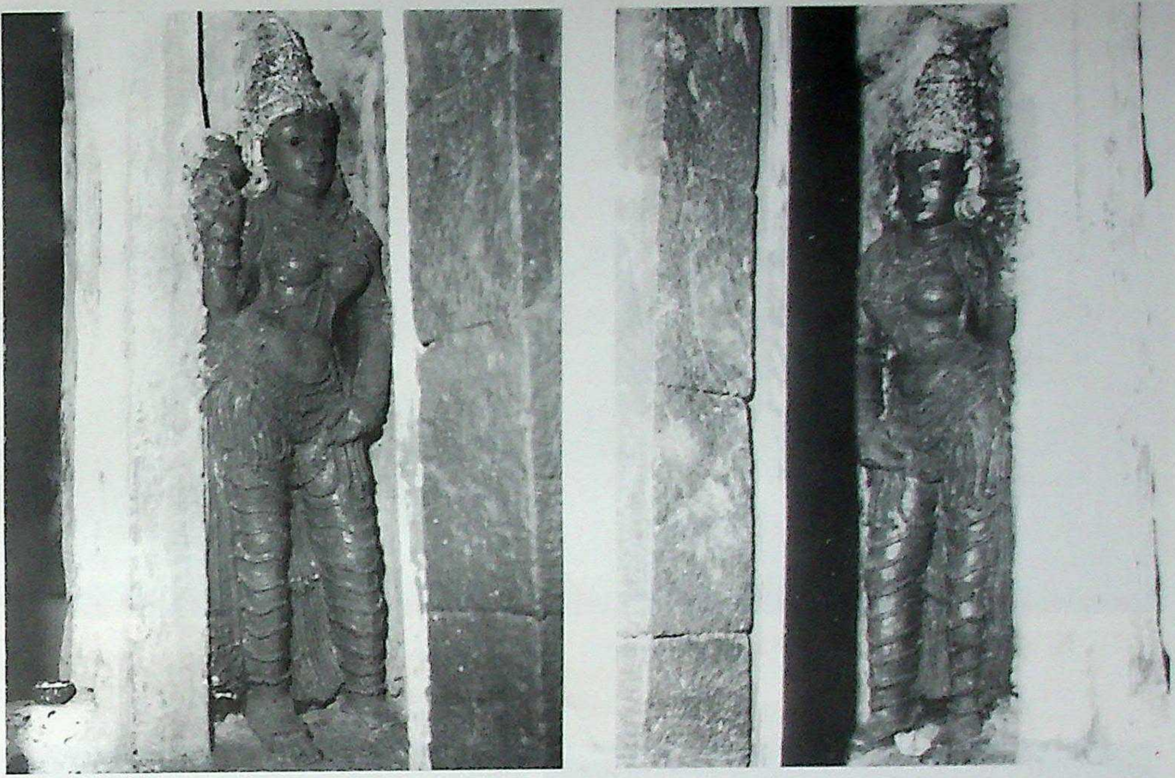
Pl. XLIX. Cēṇtamaram cave: 1. Arjuna; 2. Bhīma.



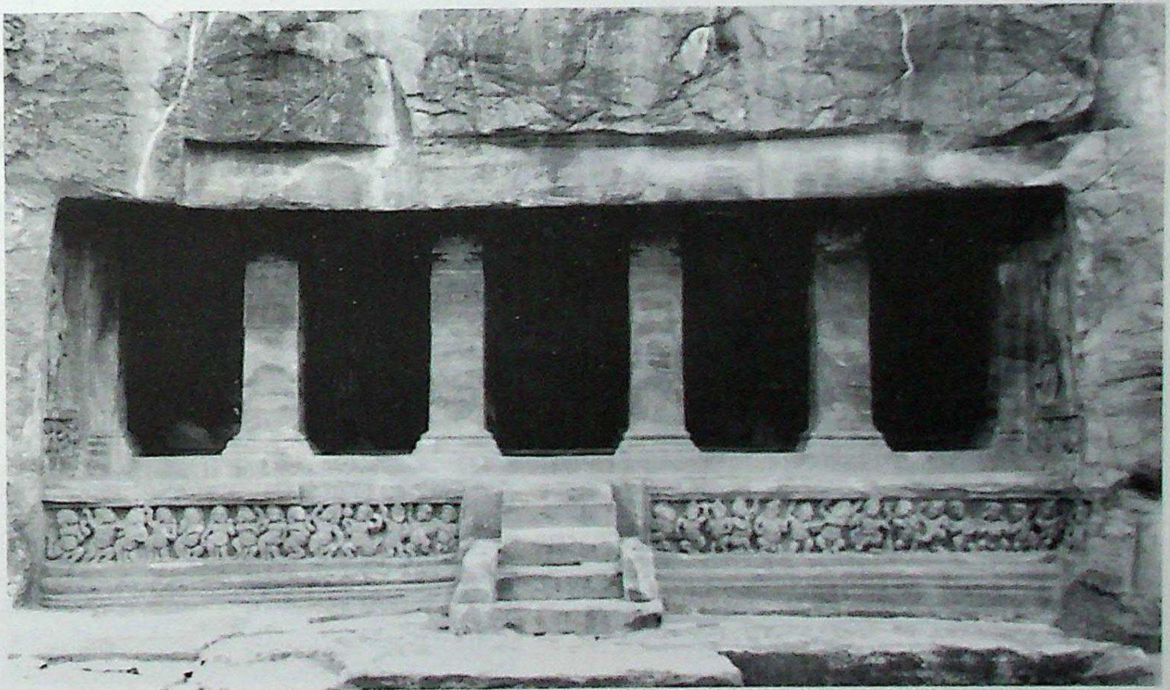
Pl. L. *Dvārapālakas*, *Koṭikkāl-maṇḍapa*, Māmallapuram (RKKR).



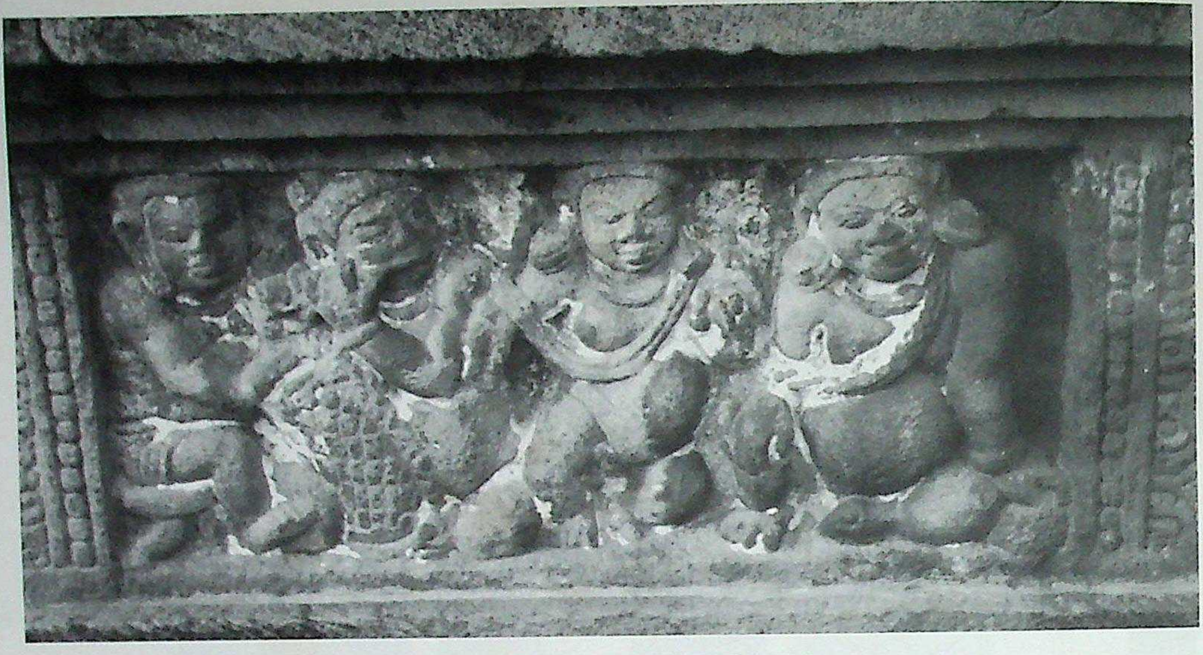
Pl. LI.1-2. Close up of *dvārapālakas* as in Pl. L.



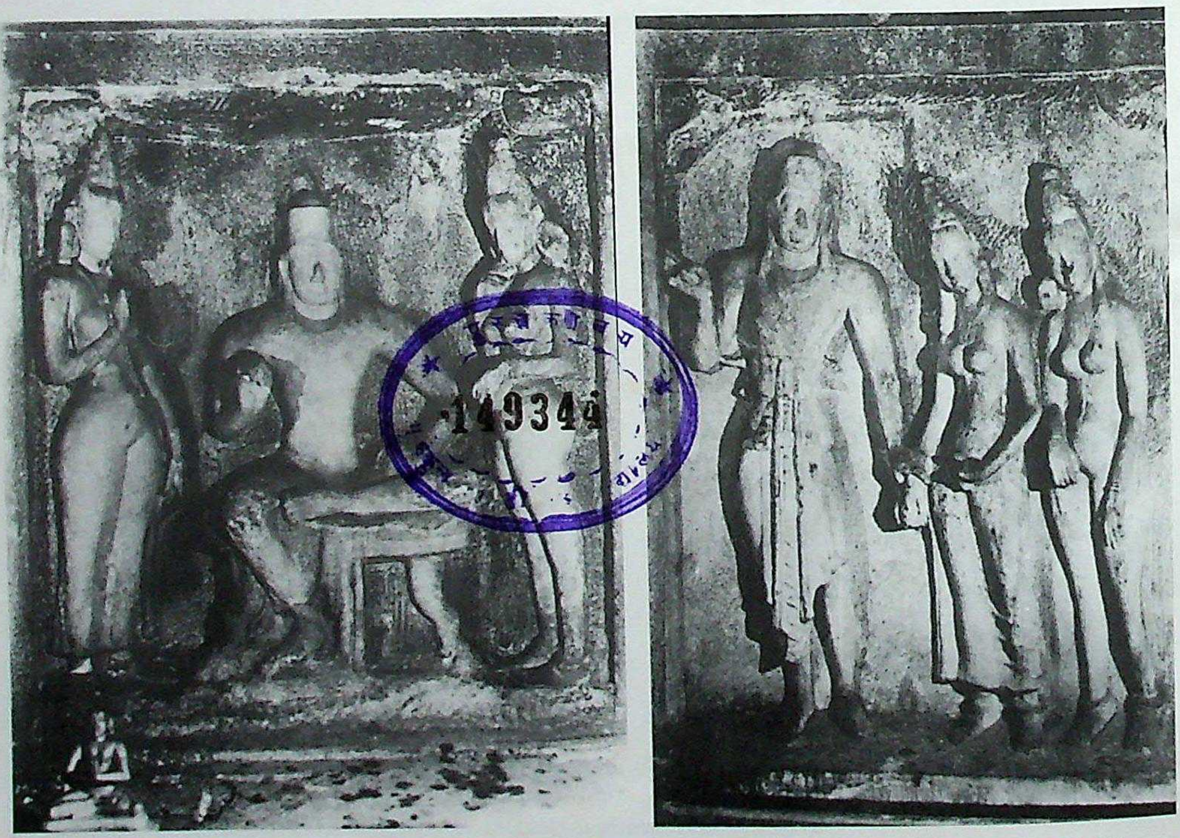
Pl. LII. *Dvārapālakas*, Pirāṇmalai cave temple (FII).



Pl. LIII.1. *Bhūtagaṇas* on plinth, Cave II, Badāmī.



Pl. LIII.2. *Bhūtagaṇas*, Aihole (RKKR).



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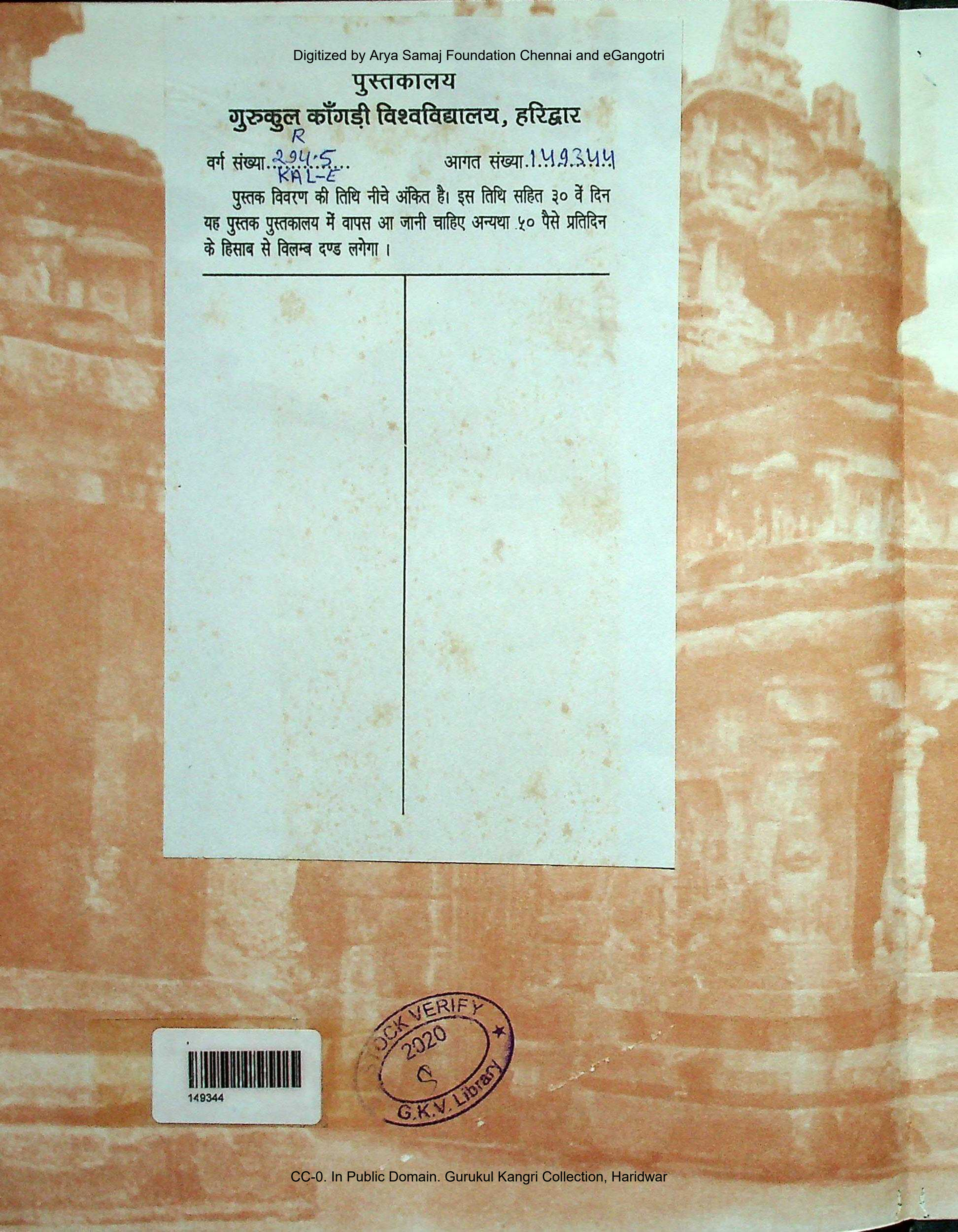
Pl. LIV. Ādivarāha-Viṣṇu-*gṛha*, Māmallapuram: 1. Mahēndravarmaṉ I; 2. Nṛsiṁhavarmaṉ I (ASI).



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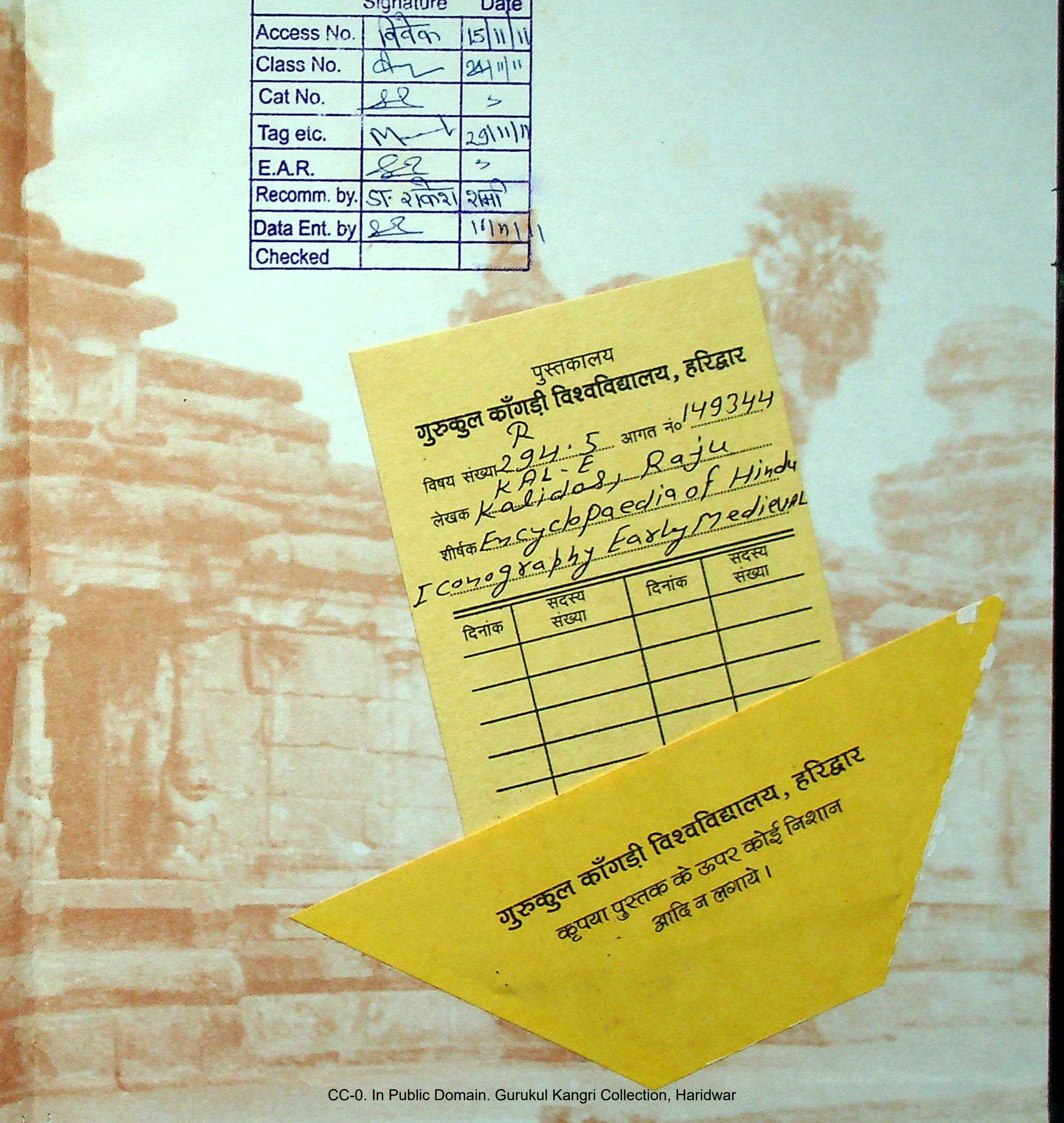

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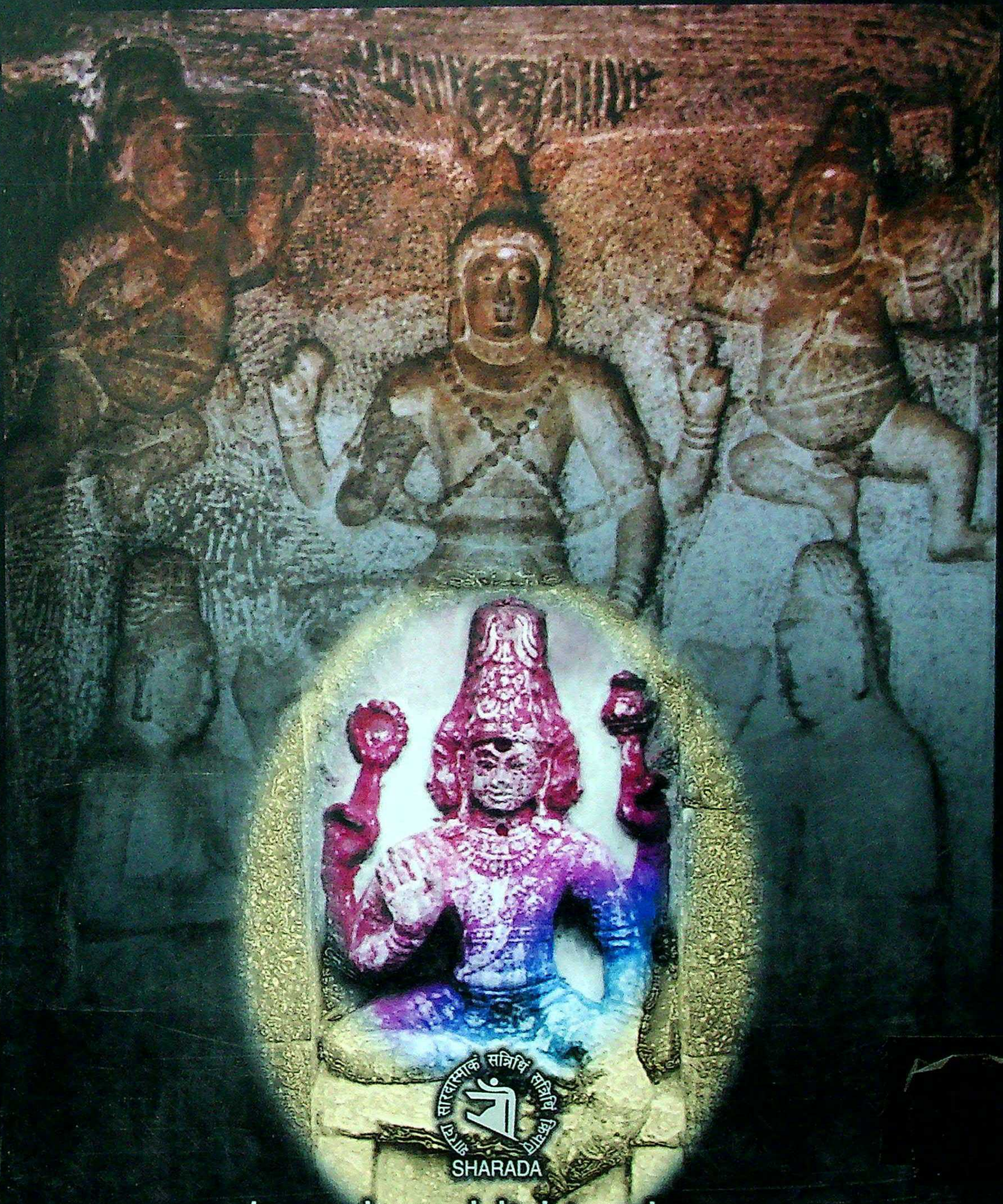

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